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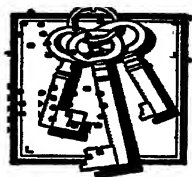




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## PROBLEMS OF THE DANUBE BASIN

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# PROBLEMS OF THE DANUBE BASIN.

By

C. A. MACARTNEY

*Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford*

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## PREFACE

The writer of a book on contemporary problems inevitably risks committing himself to statements which, even if reasonable when written, are out of date immediately after. It is impossible to avoid this danger altogether, even by the device, exasperating to printers and unprofitable to authors, of last-minute corrections in page proof; for between proof-correcting and publication an interval still lies.

The only hope is to concentrate on those underlying factors in the problems described which are unlikely to lose their validity during the life-time of a book; and I have tried as far as possible to do so. It is, however, impossible to avoid any reference to the more transient things and I am aware that some passages, written last July, may be long out of date by the time that they reach the reader. On reflection, however, and on consideration that any alterations made in proof might be unavailable, I let them stand. There is, indeed, no remedy for the situation except that of eschewing books altogether in favour of newspapers, and even that remedy—so rapidly do events march to-day—is not complete; leaving aside the question whether it be not worse than the disease.

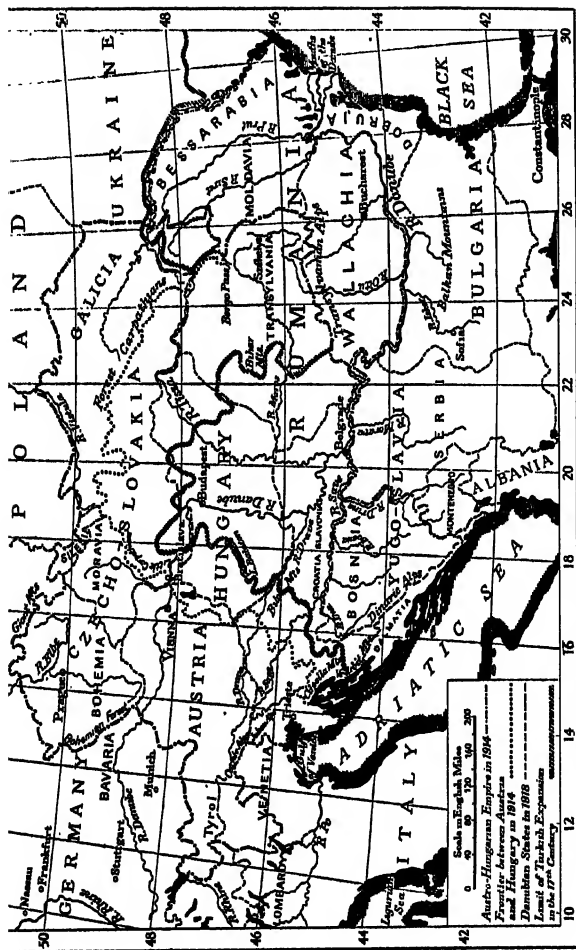
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# THE DANUBE BASIN

## I

### THE DANUBE VALLEY

The Danube is no less than 1750 miles long, and is thus easily the longest European river, after the Volga (which is European only by the geography book). It is also truly international, in a majestic sense which makes even the Rhine itself, and much more the rivers of France, Italy or England, seem mere provincials. He who travels from its source to its mouth passes not only through states, but through civilizations and centuries. The Danube rises, on a natural calculation, in multitudinous unnamed springs which well up amid moss and bilberries in fir-clad hills of the Black Forest; or officially, since the day when an eighteenth-century German princeling was inspired to add lustre to his house by cradling it, in a marble basin which laps the feet of simpering rococo nymphs and mirrors the windows of the Hofpalast, the Hofkirche and the Hofbrauerei of Donaueschingen. It ends on the farthest rim of eastern Europe in desolate, reedy marshes where exotic waterfowl nest in myriads, and bearded Russian fishermen, whose forbears were banished to these fever-stricken purlieus for their unorthodox views on God and Peter the Great, pull great sturgeon out of the water with rods and lines

and cut out their roes for caviare with rusty penknives. On its way, the Danube has passed the peaceful uplands and Gothic provincial cities of agricultural southern Germany; the crags of the Wachau, clothed with gloomy firs and crowned with grey and ruinous castle walls, or huge, arrogant monasteries; the teeming slums and sumptuous palaces of Vienna; the neo-Americanisms with which enterprising Czechs overlaid the miniature seventeenth-century Vienna of Pressburg, when they turned it into Bratislava; the enormous Hungarian plain with its wheat and maize, its sunflowers and acacias and its long-horned, shamle-footed, white oxen churning dust the colour of their own hides out of rutted paths of dry mud; the corso of Pest, thronged with fashionable idlers; the industrious Suabian villages of the Bácska; the truculent fortress, the wharves and barracks of battered Belgrade; cobbled Serbian villages populated by bent old men in sheepskin cloaks, and gaunt, long-snouted, curly-fleeced pigs; the prodigious gorge of Kazan and the fearful rapids of the Iron Gates; the mosques and minarets of Vidin and Rustchuk; dour Bulgarian villages on the right hand, gay little Rumanian villages on the left, bright with flowery gardens, white-washed walls stencilled in blue, and sugar-loaf, gilt-cupolaed Orthodox Churches; the cranes and silos and synagogues of Galatz and Braila, where ships of the Western seas embark the wealth of the Rumanian fields; the surly uplands of the Dobruja, the infinite

plains of Bessarabia, across which fezzed Tatars drive troikas of lean mares, their foals capering round them.

The traveller who has achieved this journey will have passed through or near the centres of settlement of eleven peoples, among whom there live, in greater or less number, some fifteen more. He will have heard currently spoken by natives of the Danubian region at least one of each of the main branches of the Indo-European family of languages, besides half a dozen Asiatic tongues. He will have seen God worshipped according to all the main forms of Christian ritual, besides the Mahomedan and the Jewish. He will—or he might, if he had spread his journey over some time—have observed society in every known form, from the most hierarchical to the most egalitarian, and subjected to every imaginable form of government: by despotic monarchy and free parliament, by oligarchy and democracy, by financial clique and military or clerical camarilla, by Soviet and Gestapo. He will have seen the achievements of every age; at one point his twentieth-century steamer will have carried him between two roads, one built by the nineteenth-century Hungarian Count Széchenyi, the other by the Roman Emperor Trajan. He will have seen his fellows at every stage of economic development, from imported super-Americanism to lands where the houses are recognizably identical with those figured on Trajan's column, and the methods of agriculture could be described, without change of a word, in the terms used

of the same districts by Arrian and Pliny. Very likely he will have seen packages swung on to his boat at Passau or Vienna by the most delicate modern machinery, and carried off it at Silistra by a strapping gipsy woman clothed only in cotton trousers and a charm on her forehead against the evil eye.

The statement that the traveller has passed the main habitats of eleven peoples, and has probably rubbed shoulders with twenty-six in all, gives the key to what will probably have been the feature of his journey which has impressed him most deeply, but it is a bald and inadequate description of ethnic conditions on the Danube. From it follows, of course, that each nation, taken separately, is numerically small. Of those which are usually reckoned as Danubian, the Rumanians, with 14 millions, are the largest. The Magyars number about 12 millions, the Czechs  $7\frac{1}{2}$ , the Serbs 7, the Bulgars  $5\frac{1}{2}$ , the Croats  $3\frac{1}{2}$ , the Slovaks  $2\frac{1}{2}$ , the Slovenes only about a million. On either flank of them, and living under conditions which, as we shall see, are hardly to be distinguished from theirs, are 20 million Poles, 12 million Turks, 6 million Greeks, and Finns, Lithuanians, Letts, Estonians and Albanians in even smaller numbers. This is only the broadest calculation, and it ignores a vast number of half-differentiated peoples which appear chiefly in the national statistics of those countries which hope thereby to minimize the size of a neighbouring nation: Heanzen and Huzuls, Ugro-Rusins and Lipovans, Crişani and

Karakachans, Mirdites and Wends, Bunyevci, Csángós and Šokci, and heaven knows what besides.

The nations are, moreover, intermingled in bewildering fashion. Each of the larger ones among them has, indeed, a certain central territory in which it predominates, and in which, in most cases, it has been able, some time in the past or present, to create a state: Czechs in Bohemia and Moravia, Magyars in the Hungarian plain, Rumanians north of the lower reaches of the river, and so on. But none of these nations forms the only ethnic element even in the heart of its chief home: fragments of other nationalities are dotted, like islands, in its sea, and conversely, outlying fragments of its own nationality dot the homes of its neighbours. Some areas, such as the Bánát and southern Bessarabia, are complete ethnic mosaics: in the latter the censuses even of to-day count thirteen or fourteen different nationalities, while in the former the figure, although reduced to-day to half a dozen, was even higher in the eighteenth century. Several of the nations consist solely of diasporae.

Furthermore, while the Danube traverses, or passes near, several natural geographical units, each with its natural geographic centre and its natural boundaries dividing it from its neighbours, none of these is inhabited by one nation only. In Bohemia-Moravia, two-thirds of the population are Czechs, one-third Germans; in old Hungary, only about one-half were Magyars, the rest Rumanians, Slovaks, Ruthenes,

Serbs, Germans, Jews; in Transylvania, just over half are Rumanians, nearly one-third Magyars, a quarter of a million Germans; in Bosnia, the Orthodox Serbs, the Moslims and the Catholics stand in the ratio of 4 : 3 : 2; in Croatia there is one Serb to every three Croats.

In contradistinction to this, 80 million Germans, united in a solid bloc, straddle across the upper waters of the Danube; 80 million Russians and 35 million Ukrainians stretch in a vast belt back from the shores of the Black Sea, at its mouth; 40 million Italians are separated from its middle valley only by narrow and easily passable mountain ranges.

In the contrast between the ethnic conditions of the Danube valley, and those of the great areas round it, lies the key to its history, which is an endless chain of cause producing effect, which turns into cause to produce the effect repeated. The ethnic confusion is at once the cause and the result of the invasions which have ravaged it since time immemorial. For the Danube valley is itself one of the great international highways of the world, and lies athwart another. Its own open spaces, flanked by mountains on either hand, form the chief road linking central Europe with Asia. Down it or up it lead the trade routes between these two immense areas; and down it, or up it, must pass the armies which either sends against the other. On the other hand, its lowest reaches form the one exposed and vulnerable sector of the other great road which leads from the teeming plains of Poland and

Russia to the ever-desired warm waters of the Mediterranean.

It is thus one of the most vital and most vulnerable areas of the world, and peoples and empires have from the dawn of history struggled to obtain mastery of it, or to exclude others therefrom; the attacks producing disunion and confusion, the confusion inviting fresh attack. And its political history has been as various as its ethnographical map, for as each political force, inside or outside it, has obtained the mastery, or as each new balance has been struck, the elements have been regrouped, the political structure remodelled, in the attempt to consolidate conquest or resistance: an attempt which has never met with final, nor even with long-enduring success. The Danube valley has never known stability or quiescence. Even during those periods, sometimes lasting for centuries, when some great superstructure has maintained itself apparently unshaken, forces behind, inside or underneath it have all the time been moving and regrouping themselves. At other periods, like our own, the whole edifice seems to crumble, every fixed point to vanish. The last 25 years have seen political changes in the whole Danube valley more violent and more radical than had occurred for many centuries, and of those years it is the last five which have brought the greatest changes. Yet even these have certainly not brought finality. If one prophecy can safely be made about the end of the present war, it is this: that whoever the statesmen may



be who have to reconstruct the world after it; whatever else they may have on their agenda, one of the tasks which they will have to attempt will be to find a new political form for the Danube valley.

On their success will depend not only the happiness and welfare of the scores of millions who inhabit the Danube valley itself, but also, to no small degree, the stability and security of the world. But to achieve it will call for all their sagacity. Even the normal questions which confront those who draw frontiers in any part of the world—Should this village or that railway line be assigned to State A or to its neighbour, State B?—are exceptionally numerous and complicated on the Danube, where nationalities are intermingled to such an extraordinary degree, and where ethnic, historical, strategical and economic claims often seem diametrically opposed. In 1919, when thirty new land frontiers were established in eastern Europe, every one of them was disputed in whole or in part by one, or more usually, by both of the parties to them, and on at least twenty-four of them (but my list is probably incomplete) fighting took place. Often the questions at issue concerned territories so important that to use the term 'frontier dispute' in connection with them is really an abuse of language. Transylvania, for which Hungary and Rumania wrangled in 1919, was almost as large as the Rumania which was claiming it and actually larger than the Hungary which had to cede it. Hungary at that time was cut down to one-third of her

former territory, Rumania enlarged to twice hers. Since that day changes almost as large have been made in the opposite sense.

And yet this was a case which started at least from an assumption, mutually accepted, that Hungary and Rumania were and would remain states: political organisms of a broadly similar type. But at least as often, one finds still challenged on the Danube the very fundamentals which western Europe has been accustomed for centuries to regard, for its own part, as settled. There was not a single sovereign national state on the Danube 140 years ago, nor, indeed, in all eastern Europe. The whole area was organized in a few vast, supernational empires. Between 1804 and 1919 these empires gradually crumbled away; in their place, no less than fifteen sovereign states were established in fulfilment of the principle of nationality. In the last five years more than half of these have been wiped out. Some have been simply annexed and incorporated by their imperialist neighbours. Others have been allowed to survive with a nominal semi-independence, as vassals and puppets. But while most of these puppets are nominally 'national' organizations—they cannot be called states—the nationality for which they claim to constitute a framework is in some cases quite different from that which in 1919 was accorded its independence in the name of national self-determination. And there are yet other nationalities whose claim to independence has so far been con-

sistently rejected in every reorganization of the Danube valley.

Is the principle of the national state applicable at all on the Danube? If so, how far can it be applied? Which are the nations which, by reason of their small size, backward character, long-standing historical association with others, or awkward geographical situation must be passed over even if the national principle is satisfied elsewhere? The Peace Conference of the future will have to decide all these questions; and in many cases, probably, the even more fundamental one—What are the nations of the Danube valley?

The present sketch cannot claim to answer these questions, nor to provide a solution for the problems of the Danube valley. It attempts only to indicate the nature of some of them, by tracing their origin and development. For it is perhaps even more true of the Danube basin than of any other part of Europe that its present cannot be understood, nor its future intelligently planned, without a knowledge of its past. It is not merely that such knowledge furnishes a rational and logical explanation for conditions which, lacking it, appear simply perverse and unintelligible. What is much more important is that in south-east Europe, even more than in other places, where flux and transition have been less constant and violent changes less recent, no picture of the situation which is accurate for any given moment can fail to be false

if we seek to make it reflect conditions either before or after that moment. Always, at any moment, some of the features represent permanent factors in the situation, others, temporary and fortuitous ones. Some, which may appear venerable and important, are in reality only dead lumber whose presence is stifling and retarding the live growth. Some which appear as tiny shoots to-day will be the trees of to-morrow. On the other hand, not all the great trees are rotten and not all the young plants have their roots in deep soil. The dead lumber is that of forces or conditions which have ceased to exist, whether they date from 1000 years ago, or twenty, or one; the living forces are those which spring from conditions which are present to-day, whether they came into being yesterday, or with the Habsburgs or the Premyslids, the Árpáds or Khan Asparukh. To know which to eliminate and which to foster, the historical approach is indispensable.

## II

### INVADERS AND DEFENDERS

We have spoken of the Danube valley as the great highway between Europe and Asia, and as a part of the road from Russia to the warm seas. To-day, of course, the immediate danger-thrust which menaces the liberty of the Danubian peoples and the safety of the world is following the line of the Danube's own waters. It comes from Germany, whence it strikes on the vulnerable area of the small nations.

But this is not the form in which the Danubian problem confronted our ancestors; and while it is true, as we said, that cause and effect are linked in an endless chain, invasion producing confusion and weakness, weakness provoking fresh invasion, yet the ethnographic confusion and political instability which since 1938 have allowed the German drive to be so formidable are not, in the main, to be laid at Germany's door. To all earlier generations, down to that of our grandfathers, the important and dangerous traffic through the Danube valley was that which passed, or strove to pass, from east to west, from Asia to Europe; and the significance of the highway did not lie in the fact that it ended in Germany—for that, to them, was the end and not the beginning—but that its beginning, at the river's mouth, lay in Turkey; and still more, that

it linked up at that point with the still vaster road to Tartary.

For geographically, the bleak Dobrujan uplands and the dusty Bessarabian plains with which our description ended are only the last stage and terminus of the grassland steppe belt which stretches unbroken, save only for the passes of the Pamirs, the whole way to central Asia and the Great Wall of China itself. Or rather, they are its penultimate stage; for the Carpathians are not a barrier which has ever proved impassable to a strong force, and the Hungarian plains, and even the Marchfeld east of Vienna, offer to the nomad invader conditions just as homely and as enticing as those of the Pontic steppes.

Down this road from the dawn of recorded history up to what is, historically, a mere yesterday, a succession of fierce Asiatic invaders has poured into Europe; and the whole history of the Danube valley—this time, up to to-day, which is an age of painfully attempted reconstruction—has been that of the impact of these invasions upon the settled inhabitants; the struggle, sometimes successful, sometimes vain, to resist; where resistance has failed, of the reorganization by the invaders of the territory occupied by them, and when they have weakened, of the attempts to reconstruct a new life amid the ruins created by them.

The story begins, as we have said, with the beginnings of recorded history. Scythians and Sar-

matians, both on the Pontic steppes and in the later Wallachia, Dobruja and Hungary, elicited allusions from Homer himself, excited the curiosity of Herodotus and terrified Ovid in his exile.

In the fourth century A.D. the Huns conquered the Pontic steppes, and in the fifth Attila founded his despotism on the Tisza. With his death, Transdanubia and Transylvania reverted temporarily to his Germanic ex-subjects; but almost simultaneously, bodies of another branch of the Turkish nation, the Bulgars, arrived on the Volga, whence they spread as far as the mouth of the Danube. About the middle of the sixth century the Avars, passing clean through the Pontic steppes, reached the middle Danube, whence they evicted the last of the Germans (except for remnants of the Gepids). They were joined by some of the Bulgars; other Bulgars, a century later, entered the Dobruja and subjected the north-eastern Balkans. At the end of the eighth century Charlemagne destroyed the Avar Empire and extended his own power as far as the Danube and the Save, while north of the Danube the Slavs pushed out into the Hungarian plain. But a generation later, the Magyars crossed the Don, and at the end of the ninth century established themselves in their present homes in Hungary, while the Petchenegs,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Petchenegs, Uz (from whom the Seljuk and later the Osmanli Turks derived) and Cumans were all closely related branches of the great family of Turkish peoples who inhabited central Asia in the Middle Ages. When any of these peoples

to whose superior force their migration was due, took their former homes between the Don and the Carpathians. For some centuries the Magyars now succeeded in defending their homes against any later comers, and although many new immigrants from the east reached Hungary, it was as 'guests' and subjects of the Hungarian state. Farther east, however, the Petchenegs were succeeded by the Uz and they by the Cumans; meanwhile, the Seljuk Turks overran Asia Minor. In the thirteenth century the Mongols broke the Cumans and subjected all south Russia, besides, for a time, most of the Balkans; they ravaged Hungary, but left it again. With their withdrawal, and the disintegration of the Seljuk Empire, the eastern danger seemed to recede; but reinforced and reorganized under the Osmanli dynasty, the Seljuks gathered new strength, completed the conquest of Asia Minor, crossed into Europe, and subdued successively the southern Balkans, Constantinople, the remainder of the Balkans, the Danubian Principalities and much of the Pontic coast, and a large part of Hungary. They have had no successors, but their era has hardly yet closed; their slow retreat began less than 300 years ago, and it was not until our own generation that the Balkans, except for eastern Thrace, were cleared of them.

emerged from central Asia into Europe or Anatolia, this was usually in consequence of a war between two tribes or federations, generally over disputed grazing grounds which the defeated party was forced to abandon.



It is these eastern invasions to which the special problems and characteristics of the Danube valley are due. It is true that for many centuries, while much of this was taking place, central and western Europe, and even our own islands, were also the prey of vast migratory movements. Here, too, states and civilizations were destroyed and whole peoples set afoot. But in western and central Europe, as the centuries passed, the movements ceased. In the more sheltered regions, south of the central mountain spine of Europe, the older civilizations reasserted themselves and the invaders were absorbed. In the north, the invaders absorbed or exterminated the earlier inhabitants, except such as survived in wild and inaccessible fastnesses. The modern nations grew up.

But for the eastern invasions, the history of the Danube basin would presumably have followed the same course. It would either have fallen in its entirety to one of the two great ethnic groups—the Germans and the Slavs—who ended by partitioning the rest of northern and central Europe between them; or the line between the two masses would have run somewhere across its middle or lower course. Each in fact held it in force at one period: the Germans in the first centuries after Christ, when they held not only Austria and Bohemia, but almost all of the later Hungary, including Transylvania, Moldavia, Bessarabia, and even the Pontic steppes east of the Don, and threatened to occupy the Balkans as afterwards they occupied

Lombardy; the Slavs in the seventh and eighth centuries, when they had established themselves not only in Galicia and the Ukraine, in all the Balkans except Albania and seaboard Greece, in Slovenia and Bohemia (their present domains), but also in Transylvania, western Hungary and eastern Austria.

Each, but for the eastern invaders, would have consolidated its hold, and each would then almost certainly have absorbed and assimilated the masses of the earlier populations, as the Germans absorbed the Rhaeto-Romans of the Tyrol and the Balkan Slavs absorbed the Thracian peoples of the northern Balkans. But each only reached the Danube in one of the breathing spaces between eastern invasions; and each was driven out, or broken up, by fresh invasion. The Huns drove the Germans out of the Pontic steppes and into Hungary. The Avars drove them out of Hungary, while the Magyars, and later the Turks, checked their subsequent efforts to return. The Avars and Bulgars drove a breach between the masses of the Slavs as they moved southwards, so that their occupation of the Balkans, formidable as it was, was still only partial. Afterwards, the Magyars and their unregarded successors, Petchenegs and Cumans, kept the breach open, prevented the northern and southern Slavs from joining forces on the Middle Danube, and stopped the young Russian state from establishing itself in the Balkans or threatening Constantinople.

The immigrants filled the vacuums thus created, in

part, with their own persons. For in nearly every case—the Mongol invasion is the only important exception, and that only as regards Europe—the nomad invasions were genuine migrations of peoples. The nations which appeared to Europe as terrible, well-nigh irresistible conquerors—for their discipline, mobility and endurance made them irresistible indeed, except against fortifications—were, viewed from Asia, most often only broken fragments, fleeing for dear life with their conquerors hot on their heels. The Avars were the terror of Europe; but their very name means ‘fugitive’, and hardly had they reached the Danube, when Turkish ambassadors appeared in Constantinople claiming them for runaway slaves. The Magyars were no less terrible, but their occupation of Hungary was really a desperate attempt to escape their still more formidable eastern neighbours, the Petchenegs. When, a generation later, Greek ambassadors proposed to them to attack the Petchenegs, they refused emphatically, “crying out with one voice that ‘we will not fight against the Petchenegs; for we cannot war against them, for theirs is a large land and they are a big people, and bad men. And do not in future make these propositions to us, for we do not like them.’”

When, therefore, the nomads arrived in Europe, it was without either the intention or the possibility of retreat. They moved as far west as they could and then maintained themselves as best they could, against the twin dangers of extermination by their successors or absorption by the surrounding peoples.

Many succumbed to one or the other fate, including the Bulgars, who bequeathed their name to the Slavs whom they had conquered, but adopted their language. Others survived, and their descendants (of whom the Magyars are the most important representatives to-day) became an element in the local population—an element which, differing violently as it does from its environment in ethnic origin, language, social and political structure and general outlook on things and people, thus makes the admixture of peoples on the Danube something much more heterogeneous, much less easily fused into one whole, than if the invaders had been, as they were, for example, in France, of identical or kindred stock with their enemies.

But this introduction of new elements did not nearly exhaust the ethnographical effects of the invasions on the Danube basin. The invaders were usually comparatively small bodies of men—sometimes almost incredibly small, to judge by the contemporary accounts (and these always tend to exaggerate rather than to underestimate the numbers, in order to spare the repute of the generals whom they defeated with such regularity). They were in any case very much less numerous than either the Germans or the Slavs. By driving out these larger peoples from the Danube, and by preventing the complete invasion of the Balkans, they undoubtedly saved the smaller local peoples from absorption in the greater masses, such as overtook the pre-migration populations of England, most of France, central Russia, and other places where no such inter-

vention took place. Sincerely as they would disclaim the credit for it, the Magyars (with their immediate predecessors and successors) almost certainly saved the Rumanians from national extinction. As for themselves, sheer lack of numbers would have prevented them from assimilating their subjects, had they wished to; and they did not wish. Exclusively military in psychology, permeated with an inveterate preference for the fruits rather than the processes of honest toil, they built up their states on a basis of rigid dissimulation between the conqueror and the subject—a system with which went a large tolerance towards the national individualities of the subject peoples, and every wish to see their numbers multiply, provided only that they exhibited the one necessary virtue of obedience.

But if they did not destroy their subjects' national feeling, they confused and altered it. Nationality is not born full-fledged, conscious and well-defined. It emerges slowly from the blending of many elements, which a common history gradually unites and to which fixed human institutions give precision.

The instinctive desire to create their own national state is not less strong among the people of south-east Europe than elsewhere. Time and again the persevering industry of man laid the foundations of such organizations, and so strong is humanity's need for at least the rudiments of order and comfort, so vigorous its recuperative powers, that some of these, even when

they only survived a few decades, put out the buds of a real culture and achieved a considerable degree of consolidation. The Dacias of Burebista and Decebalus in the first centuries before and after Christ, some of the early German states (especially that of the Gepids) in the sixth and seventh centuries, the two Bulgarian Empires, of the eighth to tenth and twelfth to fourteenth centuries, Croatia in the ninth century, Dušan's Serbia in the fourteenth, Hungary as St Stephen remoulded it after A.D. 1000, when it lost its original nomad-imperialist character—all of these, given a considerable period of reasonably peaceful conditions, would probably have assimilated the diverse ethnic elements of which they were originally composed, and would have developed into national states equal to any in western Europe.

In every case, however, they were destroyed (sometimes not by invaders, but even then, invaders weakened them) and their components thrown back into the melting-pot. Languishing under foreign rule, deprived of a central political organization, the peoples were not, indeed, assimilated, but their national feeling became uncertain and parochial, so that instead of a few clearly defined nations, there was left a mass in which national feeling was a matter of infinite gradations, of uncertain local patriotisms which a chance of later history might sway in any one of several directions.

To this was added, again as a result of the invasions,

intermingling of nationalities to an extent hardly known in the West. Besides intruding themselves into the body of the indigenous population, the nomads often brought with them other alien elements to work their fields, develop their industry, and guard their frontiers, or shifted the existing population round to suit their purposes. Thus the Bulgars and Avars surrounded themselves with subject Slav tribes, the Magyars colonized west Hungary with Petchenegs and Transylvania and the Zips with Germans, the Turks settled the Dobruja and Macedonia with Tatars and Circassians. Sometimes a particularly formidable invasion put whole nations bodily to flight, as when the greater part of the Serb and Croat nations fled northwards bodily before the Turks.

This migration introduced, or enhanced, a further complication. After some state had been destroyed, another which invoked and to some extent really reproduced its tradition often re-emerged as soon as the destructive force had lost part or all of its power. But with the changing circumstances, the new state very rarely coincided exactly, either ethnically or geographically, with its alleged forbears. Hence a multiplication of mutually incompatible historical claims arose, to provide fresh occasions for dispute and warfare.

The invasions had one other important general effect: they spread and perpetuated ghastly destruction and grinding impoverishment.

At the best, they were sterile and predatory; at the worst, they were sickening orgies of wanton destruction. After all these centuries, it is difficult to read without physical horror an account such as Rogerius's *Carmen miserabile* of the ravaging of Hungary by the Tatars; and certainly many stories, equally terrible, went unrecorded. When they had settled down and had consolidated their position, the invaders were theoretically not averse from seeing their subjects produce wealth for them; there were even some periods during which trade flourished better under the Turkish and Tatar rulers (thanks to the vastness of their domains, and to their short way with highwaymen) than in many so-called Christian countries. But always there was the burden of the great, purely military class of conquerors to be supported; always the haunting, and not ill-justified suspicion that if the subject peoples attained to wealth or enlightenment, they would conspire against their masters; always the inveterate eastern heritage of indolence and corruption.

Such were the chief general effects produced by the eastern invasions on the lands which fell victims to them. But it is to be noted that these effects reached far beyond the regions which the invaders actually incorporated in their empires. To the student, indeed, their frontiers often seem like that shining surface of a pool in which the world of reality meets its upside-down reflection. Naturally, the destruction wrought by the invaders extended beyond their consolidated



conquests. But even when this was checked, the overriding requirements of security necessitated the establishment of a regime in which defence was the first object. Large armies had to be kept up; the exchequers were depleted by their demands, and a vicious circle set up wherein the same conditions which called rapaciously for more and more money also prevented the creation of wealth. The social organization and outlook of the military age lived on; the leader of society was not the clerk who enlightened men's minds, nor the merchant who comforted their bodies, but the strong-handed lord who stood between them and destruction—and the markgraf or the frontier captain was not always a much better master than the beglerbeg or the spahi.

The political effects, again, were almost exactly the same behind the defensive line as in front of it, and particularly so in preventing the formation of independent national states. When the invasions threatened the great national masses, they could unite in self-defence. This is, in fact, what happened to some extent in Germany in the early Middle Ages, attacked by the Avars and the Magyars, and to the Russians when they rallied round Moscow against the Mongols. But as we have seen, there was in south-east Europe, precisely thanks to earlier invasions, a whole fringe of small nations which were neither German nor Russian. These were not able to withstand unaided the attacks against them. They sought the protection of greater

powers, whose position was less exposed—or those powers took advantage of their helplessness to engulf them. Thus facing the multi-national empires of the invaders, other defensive empires grew up which were hardly less vast, and very little less multi-national. Even the lesser complications were faithfully reproduced also. The refugee peoples who left the one area entered the other. There was the same settlement of frontier zones and colonization of empty places by alien populations, the same confusion of historical claims, even the same establishment of a national hierarchy whereby—it would be false to say, the ruling peoples—the peoples whom the rulers could best trust or use most profitably came to form a sort of national upper class, dominating the more backward or less reliable elements.

But these processes, it must be remarked, never reached the static phase. For one essential characteristic of the invasions was their intermittent nature. We spoke just now of the reflections on a still sheet of water; but the invasions were rather like the billows hurled against a coast by an angry sea. The waves rushed up the beach, submerging it; then they withdrew, leaving their pools and their wreckage behind them. And after each had receded, there began anew the persevering task of rebuilding life on the slippery, defaced slopes: a task which could never be undertaken *ab initio*, for the slope was never clean, but always had to take into account the situation bequeathed by earlier history.

### III

#### THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE

The conditions which we have described are those which were regularly produced and perpetuated by the invasions throughout the whole period of their recurrence, and over the whole area affected by them. Take any moment of the history of south-east Europe, and you will find it at one stage or another of progressive destruction by invasion, or of recovery from its effects. Take any characteristic political problem of south-east Europe, and you will find that it can be traced back to the impact of one or another invasion.

Thus it is perfectly possible to state the problem of the Danube in general terms, as that of coping with the conditions arising out of the inordinate severity and protraction of the invasions; indeed, if it is to be seen in its true perspective and proportions, it must so be stated. But although the general picture is always similar, the problems involved in any given area and at any given moment will, of course, always be particular ones—special applications of the general rule; and they will vary widely according to local conditions. To stop at the generalization is therefore to leave the field open to false analogies which may prove extremely harmful; and in examining the

position to-day, it is necessary to regard it in detail, as a particular problem, or complex of problems, arising out of particular causes.

South-eastern Europe to-day is lying in one of the troughs between the waves of invasion—or if we assume that Europe will succeed in not so far destroying itself as to allow fresh invasions to occur, then it is engaged in liquidating the effects of the two last invasions. One of these—the Mongol—exercised its chief effects on an area somewhat remote from the Danube, and its influence on the Danubian problem, although powerful, was indirect and need not be described in detail. Even what may seem to have been the most important historical role of the Mongols in Europe—that of driving Russia back from the Black Sea to the central forests—was afterwards taken over by the Turks. But it is also true that it was the need of common defence against the Golden Horde which united the Russian principalities into a single state. That state then became so powerful that it grew into a huge empire which afterwards expanded far beyond the limits of the Russian land, taking in the former dominions of the Mongol Khans themselves, as well as the territory which the Turks had taken from the Mongols, besides the Baltic seaboard and Poland. Thus in modern times, after many centuries, Russia again reached the Black Sea and the mouth of the Danube; but in the form of an empire of which only the core and centre (although this was a very large

one) was Russian, while the periphery was inhabited by non-Russian peoples.

The foremost of these peoples was the Polish, who never willingly accepted Russian rule, and cast it off during the World War, after which the Baltic nations also recovered their freedom. The political events of those years, however, left undecided the difficult but exceedingly important Ukrainian problem, where the position was much more ambiguous than that of the Poles. For the Ukrainian land had been the original Russian motherland, and the Ukrainian people the original Russian stock. Only when the centre of Russian nationalism established itself decidedly in Moscow, and took on specifically Muscovite characteristics, did the question arise whether Ukrainian had now become a separate nationality. A distinctive 'Ukrainian' national movement made itself felt in the nineteenth century, but was rigidly suppressed by the Czarist officials. Meanwhile, smaller but still considerable numbers of the same people had been associated for centuries, not with Muscovite rule, but with Polish, and subsequently with Austrian, where, under the name of Ruthenes, they had developed along different historical and cultural lines. Smaller numbers still, in the north-east of Hungary, had undergone an entirely different development. How far, if at all, Ukrainian nationalism would ever become a force in any or all of these areas was a major problem bequeathed to modern Europe by the long-perished Golden Horde.

While all this was going on, Danubian Europe was

first experiencing, and afterwards seeking to liquidate, the effects of the Turkish invasion.

The Ottoman invasion was, as we have said, very far from being the first of its kind, and the general effects which we have described had already been repeatedly produced by its sundry predecessors. When, however, it occurred, south-eastern Europe had reached a stage which gave better promise of development along western lines than any other stage in its history. It had known no important immigrant movement from the east since the invasion of the Magyars at the end of the ninth century; and the Magyars themselves had long since lost their original character of predatory conquerors and had founded a European state which could vie in culture, prosperity and stability with most of its contemporaries. It still contained large numbers of non-Magyars, particularly the Rumanians who were already becoming numerous in Transylvania, the Germans of Transylvania, the Zips and the larger towns of central Hungary, and the Slovaks and Ruthenes of the north. Some four-fifths of its total population was, however, Magyar or Magyarized by the fifteenth century, and although no man can say whether complete national unification would ever have followed, yet the tendency of the time was certainly rather towards consolidation than disintegration. The young Rumanian principalities of Moldavia and Wallachia were at a rude and primitive stage, but developing hopefully towards a national Rumanian state.

The Balkans were in the process of transformation from the supernational order of the Byzantine Empire to that of the national state when the Turks entered them in the fourteenth century. In spite of much intermingling and many cases of doubtful nationality, five recognizable nations had emerged, each with a comparatively clearly marked central territory of its own: the Bulgars in the north-east, the Serbs in what was later known as Old Serbia, Novi-Bazar, Montenegro and northern Macedonia; the Croats in the later Croatia and western Bosnia; the Greeks in Thrace, the Constantinople area, the islands and the Hellenic peninsula; the Albanians, where they live to-day. Each of these, except the Albanians, possessed their own state or states, although the Croat state had since the eleventh century formed part of the Lands of the Hungarian Crown, and many of the Greeks had passed under Venetian or Genoese rule after the Latin conquest of Constantinople in 1204. It was still uncertain whether Bosnia would end by gravitating towards Croatia in the west or Serbia in the east, whether it would be divided between the two, or develop an independent Southern Slav nationality of its own. It was equally uncertain whether the Morava valley and eastern Macedonia would end by becoming Serbian or Bulgarian, but a prolonged period of freedom from invasion would have decided both these questions. It would also have brought about the assimilation of the smaller colonist minorities, such as the Armenians of the Maritsa valley and the Cumans

of the Vardar, and probably of the Kutzovlachs, or Arumans, who formed a wandering diaspora throughout the Balkans.

All the Balkan states had reached a stage of moral and material civilization which was far from despicable. All were chiefly peasant, but all possessed cities, some industries and trade, art and literature. Socially, all had developed along lines not very different from those of western Europe, and besides the head of the state—who sometimes kept up a court of great splendour—they possessed a nobility and a clergy drawn from their own ranks.

West and north of the limit reached by the previous invasions, Austria, originally founded as a defensive march, first against the Avars, then the Magyars, had lost its original special character and was developing into a normal German state like its neighbour, Bavaria. Little now seemed to mark it out for a special European role. Poland had expanded beyond its ethnic borders, but had at least achieved a solid Polish national centre for its state life. Bohemia was in the most equivocal position of all, for during earlier centuries it had, despite the Czech nationality of most of its inhabitants, become a member of the German Reich. This resulted in closer connections with Germany than was safe for the Czechs. Further, besides the Germans who peopled its cities, as they did those of Hungary and Poland, there was a German peasant population which already at that date occupied the vital strategic areas of the Böhmerwald—the Czech villages beginning then, as now, in the open



plain inside the mountains; while the German element was larger still in Silesia, which was definitively attached to the lands of the Bohemian Crown in 1335. The Czechs had, however, maintained their national character and developed a national culture full of brilliance and vitality.

Into these hopeful beginnings of consolidation came the brutal blow of the Turkish invasion, which overran all the Balkans, including Byzantium and the Rumanian Principalities, and central Hungary. The effects on the conquered territories were, of course, enormous. The old frontiers, with the exception of those of the Rumanian Principalities, were abolished, together with the old political organizations (with a partial exception in the case, again, of the Rumanian Principalities). More than this, the social order which had been developing along national lines in the various political units, vanished with their political independence. In Serbia and Bulgaria the old upper and middle classes were entirely destroyed in attempting to stem the Turkish advance, and for centuries these nations were reduced to a uniform peasant level, which in the case of Bulgaria, and for a time in that of Serbia also, lacked even a native clergy; the restoration of the Patriarchate of Peč in 1557 remedied this lack in the case of Serbia, but in Bulgaria the clergy was Greek until the nineteenth century. The landowning and official class was represented by the dominant and alien Moslem element, which was actively hostile to the national cause. A non-official middle class hardly

existed in the desolate economic state of the country. Bosnia and Albania retained some of their native aristocracy, who saved their lives and their properties by embracing Islam, but in so doing became lost to their nations. Greece, with her favoured maritime position and imperial tradition, kept a middle class alive, and in Moldavia and Wallachia a land-owning aristocracy of mixed Rumano-Greek origin survived, distinguishing itself, incidentally, by its merciless oppression of the Rumanian peasantry. But of all the nations which passed under Turkish rule it can be said that the vast majority of them were reduced to a primitive peasant mass, with peasant economy and the peasant social outlook.

The level on which they lived during all these centuries was little above that of animals. It is a tragic and moving thing to read the medieval descriptions of Serbia and Bulgaria before the Turks came, as of Villehardouin's Crusaders, who could not sufficiently admire the splendour of Philippopolis, with its towers and rich houses, and seem in general to have regarded the Balkan countries (not to speak of Constantinople itself) as fully on a level with their own homes; and to contrast them with what Kinglake and other English travellers wrote of the same peoples, four or five hundred years later—those years in which England developed from the England of the Wars of the Roses to that of the Georges and Victoria: the awful terrors of the plague, the grim oak forest extending over

100 miles, the hamlet 'made up of about a dozen clay huts standing upon a small tract of ground hardly won from the forest'. The Turk is gone from the Balkans to-day, but their primitive condition, their grinding poverty in the midst of natural abundance and unexploited natural resources, are the monument of his sojourn there. Its effects can be judged even in a rapid transit by simple observation of the architecture and the passengers. There is, particularly in the south and east, where Byzantine influence was strongest, ample store of noble buildings, almost all in ruins, dating from the Middle Ages and the early Renaissance. Then there is the pseudo-Munich of the nineteenth century, or the pseudo-American of the twentieth. From the intervening period, when the Turks were there, there is absolutely nothing. The peasant houses, which were perforce replaced when they fell down, preserve (with great picturesqueness) the fossilized style of the fourteenth century; and the ploughs and spinning wheels, as well as the dresses of the peasants, where they are not borrowed from modern Chicago, date back to exactly the same period. The chief modern historian of Hungary allows to Turkish rule there only two positive achievements: the introduction of a few Oriental fruits and flowers, and the building (by slave labour) of a few thermal baths. In return, the Turks depopulated the heart of Hungary and turned it from a fruitful and prosperous land into a tangled and malarious desert.

On top of all this came vast movements of population. The Turks themselves settled in force in Constantinople, Thrace, the Maritsa valley, and parts of Macedonia, the north Bulgarian plain and some of the Greek islands, driving the centre of Greek national life back to the old Hellas, but leaving enough Greeks in Constantinople, Smyrna and Thrace to keep alive the old Greek imperial ideals and ideas. Farther west, practically the whole Yugoslav population moved north. The Magyars of central Hungary were almost exterminated, but their places were partially filled (only partially, for the population declined enormously) by Serbs or Wallachs from the Šumadija. Farther west, the Croats moved northward similarly into Slavonia (there mingling with the Serb immigrants) and the northern fringe of the present Croatia. The southern parts of the old Croatia became Bosnian. Serbs moved into the Šumadija and other parts of the present Serbia, and east into Bosnia; Serbs and Bosnians up into Montenegro and Dalmatia, Slavizing the earlier Illyro-Albanian or Mavrovlach population. Albanians and Vlachs moved down into Greece, or into Old Serbia and Macedonia, the surviving Slav inhabitants of which were left as a debatable element between the Serbs to their north and the Bulgars to their north-east; each of whom had possessed them in the course of their history, and had left enduring marks on them.

## IV

### THE HABSBURG MONARCHY

Meanwhile, the young King Lewis, who, by virtue of one of the innumerable dynastic combinations of the century, was wearing the crowns of both Hungary and Bohemia, was killed after the battle of Mohács (1526), in which the Turks destroyed the Hungarian army. By virtue of another marriage treaty, arranged some years before, his joint dominions passed to the Habsburg dynasty, which thus became in the twinkling of an eye by far the greatest central European Power, rulers *de facto* of a large part of the Danube basin, including German possessions stretching far up the valley, and elsewhere in Germany, and with *de jure* claims extending much farther still: as far as the old frontiers of Hungary, now subjected to the Turks.

The unification of the Danube basin under the Habsburgs was thus the direct result of the Turkish advance, and the readiness with which the Croatian and Moravian Estates, and subsequently the Bohemian and part of the Hungarian, accepted the Habsburgs as their rulers was undoubtedly due to the imminence of the Turkish danger. Nevertheless, the position which actually came about after 1526 contained much which can legitimately be called fortuitous. It is true that for a couple of hundred years before Mohács, the

links of all kinds between the various Danubian states, and Poland, had become steadily closer. There were important trading connections between them; the culture of all of them had much in common, in spite of their national differences; and above all, inter-marriages between their reigning houses had become so common that for more than a century it had been almost the rule that at least two of them should be ruled by the same sovereign. There had been Bohemian-Polish personal unions, Bohemian-Hungarian, Hungarian-Polish, Bohemian-Austrian, and twice already, although only for a few years all told, Austro-Hungarian-Bohemian under Habsburgs.

Nevertheless, there was nothing inevitable in the fact that the combination which became the basis for all further developments should have been that of a weak Hungary and a weak Bohemia, with a much stronger Austria, which thus took the headship and weighed more in the balance than the rest put together—Poland being excluded and thereby reserved for later dismemberment. The Habsburgs themselves, only a little while before, had almost ceased to be important, and the meteoric rise of the family to world power had been due to events entirely unconnected with the Turkish wars or with the question of the Hungarian and Bohemian succession. Least of all were their recent acquisitions such as Tyrol or the Vorarlberg predestined by historic necessity to take a greater share than, say, Bavaria in the defence and

development of the Danube. If one of a dozen little things had been different, the defensive bloc which grew up on the Danube—if any such bloc, larger than a single state, had proved necessary—might very easily have omitted Austria altogether, or might have included an Austria so weak that it would either have dropped out of the combination when the Turkish danger was stemmed, or have occupied in it a role secondary to that of Prague, Budapest or Cracow.

These speculations are not unjustifiable, for they guard us against the danger of paying overmuch reverence to some factors in the situation which arose; supposing that because certain elements have figured in the Danubian picture since 1526, they must be included in every fresh version of it, or that it would be unnatural to include now others that remained outside it then. Now, however, we must turn to examine the use which the Habsburgs made of the superb gift bestowed on them by Turkish military prowess, Hungarian disunity, Czech jealousy, Polish absorption with the Baltic, and the peculiar sagacity displayed by the Emperor Maximilian in designating husbands for his grandchildren.

The Danubian States, when the Archduke Ferdinand succeeded to them, consisted of a number of separate political units, the only common link between which was the person of the sovereign. They fell, however, into three groups, each of which possessed a certain and very varying degree of internal unity. The most

complete unity was that formed by the Lands of the Crown of St Stephen, of which Hungary proper (of which the Habsburgs inherited *de facto* only the western edge) was a centralized political organism, in which only Croatia constituted a separate body with a large degree of independence. The Lands of the Bohemian Crown had long been under a single sovereign, but fell into three divisions: Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia, the Estates of each of which often acted with a certain independence (and in fact accepted the Habsburg succession independently, as Croatia did independently of Hungary). The Austrian provinces as such had practically no common institutions, except the person of the sovereign and the few officials whom he employed as his personal secretariat; but certain among them, e.g. Upper and Lower Austria, and Styria, Carniola and Carinthia, possessed certain inner connections among themselves.

Under the sovereign, whether in his capacity of King of Hungary (and through Hungary, of Croatia), King of Bohemia, Archduke of Austria, etc., the power lay with the various Estates. In 1526 these presented a fairly uniform appearance in all the kingdoms and lands. Everywhere the power was almost entirely in the hands of the land-owning aristocracy, great and small (chiefly the former, which had relegated the smaller fry to a secondary place), and the great ecclesiastics. The towns occupied a very subordinate position; the peasants, whose position had been



gradually deteriorating everywhere, were without any representation at all, except in the Tyrol.

In the German-Austrian and Slovene lands, the Estates were entirely German; in Bohemia, mainly Czech; in Hungary, Magyar; in Croatia, Croat, with some Magyar influence. The towns both in Bohemia and Hungary were mostly German, but had little influence on policy, and what they had was not exerted in a German national sense.

The history of the Habsburg Empire is far more complicated than that of the Ottoman, where there was something like a straight fight between invaders and invaded and a clear victory for the former; followed later by another straight fight, at the end of which, but hardly earlier, conflicts in the camp of the new victors became apparent. In the Habsburg monarchy three main forces were engaged: the dynasty, whose steady aim it was to break down all popular institutions and to transform its patrimony into a centralized, unified, and autocratically ruled whole, whose inhabitants, whatever tongues they spoke among themselves, should know only one political loyalty, their devotion to the Crown; the political resistance to these efforts, represented in the first instance by the struggle waged by the Estates of the old historical-political units of Bohemia, Hungary, etc., to preserve their rights and powers; and the national force proper, which sought to create a framework in which it could find satisfaction, inside or

outside the Monarchy. But apart from the normal complexities inevitable in a three-cornered struggle, even the distinction between these three forces was not clear-cut. The two last-named were sometimes identical, as when Czechs were asserting their independence in Bohemia, Magyars in Hungary, Germans in Styria, or Poles in Galicia; but at other times they were directly opposed to each other—a situation which often arose in connection with the position of the national minorities, or, as they were sometimes called, the ‘non-historical nationalities’ within the historic-political units. And the distinction between the centralist, dynastic forces and their opponents was often blurred by the fact that the former often identified themselves with the cause of one nationality.

Furthermore, the combatants were much more equally matched than in the Ottoman Empire. The dynasty never succeeded in crushing completely either of its opponents. In the latter period, it was driven into allying itself now with one, now with the other; and as it always exchanged partners as soon as the balance began to tilt at all dangerously, the scene was—and remained until 1918—always one of diverse forces, half-developed, half-destroyed; so that in some areas none has definitely triumphed over the others to this day. Moreover, conditions varied immensely from one part of the Monarchy to the other; with the result that although identical forces, acting in the same directions, were at work in all of them, the results

of their interplay were not the same in any two provinces.

The struggle in the early stages was a purely political one, in which national considerations, in the modern sense of the term, were involved only to a small degree, and then only indirectly. Indeed, the whole attitude of the Habsburgs towards nationalism was quite unlike that of the modern national states. They had no wish, and never tried, to change the national individualities, as such, of their subjects. These were regarded as natural and ineradicable characteristics, and were accepted as such, above all, in the case of the peasants, who formed, after all, the great bulk of the population. The peasants remained, until well on in the nineteenth century, simple objects of policy, not even usually in direct contact with the state machinery, but administered for it by their landlords. To try to make a Serb frontiersman, a Wallach goat-herd or a Ruthene field-labourer anything but what God had made him would have seemed to any Habsburg absurd and unnatural. Indeed, the most autocratic among them were precisely those who took most pains to give the peasants some schooling in their own tongue, and insisted most strongly that the local officials who had traffic with them should be able to converse with them. To the last, the mass of the peasantry in the Austrian lands proper were practically unaffected by the national issue.

In any case, the idea that villeins might entertain

any political ambitions connected with their nationality was one that did not usually occur to the Habsburgs; in which view they were perfectly right. Political aspirations remained the privilege of the upper classes, up to the nineteenth century. Nor did the dynasty ever favour, in a positive sense, the national aspirations of any one nation among the politically active classes. In the negative sense, one nation might receive harsher treatment than another if it proved more truculent or more disloyal. But the object was to reduce all national feeling to a common level, to extirpate from anywhere any feelings except that of attachment to the dynasty. This was to be done, partly by influencing the outlook of the Estates, but more (since the Estates represented a degree of self-government undesirable on general grounds) by replacing them by the organs of central government: a bureaucracy, an army and a supporting Church (the alliance between Vienna and the Vatican was long-standing and respectable), whose members should be strongly 'kaisertreu', owing their sole allegiance, not to any historic unit or modern nationality, not even to 'Austria' (a name which, historically, did not exist in official use for many decades), but simply and solely to the reigning member of the dynasty.

The initial assault on the Estates was thus directed quite impartially against them all; and proof that the political consideration was uppermost can easily be found in the fact that no Habsburg, to the last, altered

the frontiers of the great historic-political units which were the strongholds of the Czech, Polish and Magyar national feeling. Galicia in 1848, Hungary for some years after 1849 were tentatively subdivided on national lines, but the grand re-arrangements carried through by the Revolutionary Parliament in France and by Alexander II in Yugoslavia were never attempted. Franz Ferdinand was the first Habsburg seriously to plan this, and he did not live to carry out his plans.

The historic units remained intact, but their power was taken from them to a degree which varied, not with the will of the dynasty, but in inverse ratio with the power of resistance. The various small German Crownlands fell into more complete political subjection than the great single unit of Bohemia; much more than Hungary, which, with its still larger size and unquenchable spirit of resistance, kept its constitution theoretically intact until 1849 and recovered it in 1867. In Austria proper, however, including Bohemia, the constitutional struggle ended in the seventeenth century with a complete enough victory for the central power, and Galicia was brought into the same system after the partition of Poland.

Indirectly, however, the national position was strongly affected by this political struggle. The chief sufferers were the Czechs, on whom the full force of the imperial hammer had descended—rather, it is true, in the shape of the Counter-Reformation

eliminating Protestantism, than of centralism eradicating historic rights or of Germans crushing Czechs. But the result was the same: to wipe out the Czech political classes. No other nation of the Monarchy suffered such a fall, although some of them—in Austria the Slovenes and Ruthenes in particular—had never risen above the peasant level to which the Czechs were now forced down. Hungary saved herself partially, by successful resistance; the Germans had a Catholic element which weathered the storm; the Poles, already Catholics, entered Austria in a milder age.

While the Czechs were the chief losers, the chief gainers were the Germans, by origin or adoption, who in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries came to occupy something of a leading position in Austria and Bohemia, and even, to a lesser extent, in Galicia and Hungary. The processes by which this came about were just the reverse of those modern instances where a nation imposes itself on others. The Habsburgs did not identify the spirit of their régime with the German national spirit, nor seek to make of their dominions a state held together and supported by, or expressing and fulfilling the ideals of, German nationalism—a thing just as abhorrent to them as Polish, Czech or Slovene nationalism. But if the centralized Government institutions, including the army, were to be efficient, they had to be homogeneous; if possible, using one language alone, by which instructions were

passed downward and outward. Only the lowest official of all, who had to deal with the 'publicum', needed to speak and understand the language of his subjects. In practice, the only two possible languages for the centralized Austrian administration were German and Latin; and the latter remained the language of the highest administration until late in the eighteenth century. German, however, was more easily handled by most of those who had to use the official language, and it gradually became universal for this purpose. This meant no 'Germanization' in the modern sense of the term. Even if, as one or two enthusiasts dreamed, the whole of Habsburgs' subjects had been made to speak German, this would not, according to their intentions, have meant turning them into 'Germans' in any national sense, any more than the United States, by forcing the children of their immigrants to learn English, wish to prepare the way for the annexation of the U.S.A. by England. The patriotism which the Habsburgs wished to inculcate was, as we have said, purely dynastic.

Thus any person who could speak the official language sufficiently well, and displayed the right spirit, whatever his origin or mother tongue, was freely admitted to the imperial services, which contained, in fact, many recruits of non-German origin. Naturally, however, persons of German mother-tongue found employment in it most easily, on account of their language; because they were, on the whole,

the most cultured element in Austria and the best fitted to fill administrative posts; and finally, precisely because of the singular lack of national feeling which characterized them at that time, in contrast, in particular, to the Czechs, and made them politically the most reliable element in the Monarchy. A further national consequence was that the non-Germans who entered the imperial service tended to Germanize.

The vast Austrian administrative class thus came to consist (except in the areas, which, it is true, were very extensive, where other principles, to be described in due course, were applied) mainly of persons who were Germans either by origin or adoption; and this involved important consequences for all the nationalities of the Monarchy, including the Germans themselves.

On the one hand, the Germans of Austria found it comparatively easy to remain 'kaisertreu'. When all doors inside the Monarchy opened to them so easily, the temptation to look outside it was correspondingly reduced. Up to the movement for German unification in 1848, and almost up to the later events of 1866 and 1870, it might, indeed, be said that the temptation did not exist. Austria was already the largest German Power; there was no 'Germany'; and simply to discard the non-Germanic provinces of the Monarchy was no very tempting national ideal. Even to the last, a much smaller percentage of Germans was disloyal to the Monarchy than of any other of its nationalities.



They did not, however, view their own position inside the Monarchy quite so dispassionately as did their imperial masters. There was among them a very widespread consciousness of a special German-Austrian 'mission'. They, under the Emperor, were, in their own untranslatable phrase, 'die Träger des österreichischen Staatsgedanken'. They regarded themselves as doing the work for the Emperor, and entitled to its rewards; and the fact that they were not German nationalists in the sense of wishing to destroy Austria or to exchange the rule of its Emperor for that of the King of Prussia, did not prevent them from feeling, and asserting, a right to differential treatment within the Monarchy, when it came to their own relations with the Czechs and Slovenes.

This assumption of superiority was made more easily, because of the superior social and economic position which they consolidated during the period of centralization. Here they had, as a nation, only one rival in the Monarchy: the Italians, whose position was always so special as hardly to affect the general picture. Stubbornly particularist, they kept themselves to themselves, not attempting to interfere with the general life of the Monarchy. Of the rest, the Slovenes had never possessed either a national aristocracy or a national middle class. The Czechs lost their native aristocracy after the battle of the White Mountain in 1620. Most of their lands were given to creatures of the Habsburgs, many of them Spaniards

or Walloons by origin, most of whom soon Germanized, like the rest of the aristocracy. It is true that some of their remote descendants played at Czech national politics in the nineteenth century; but this was for purely political reasons, to which we shall come presently.

The industrial and trading middle class, including under that term the skilled labour of the guilds, was already almost entirely in German hands; for almost everywhere in eastern Europe Germans had been called in, in early times, to found and man the towns, while the native aristocracy enjoyed the more congenial occupations of landowning, hunting and fighting.\* These Germans had not, in any country,

\* It is remarkable how regularly the trading and industrial classes in all Danubian countries are of different ethnic origin from the landowning and working classes. This is not solely due to national proclivities, for many nations which obstinately refuse to trade in their own countries do so with success in others. Thus the middle class in Bohemia was German; but half the shops of Vienna are kept by Czechs. The Rumanians left all their business to Jews, but their near relatives, the Kutzovlachs, were some of the chief traders of the Balkans. Trade in Serbia was carried on by Spanish Jews and Kutzovlachs, but the Serbs were famous as successful traders in Hungary. Even the lordly Tatars are the principal business men of the Dobruja. Other nations have special trades. The market gardeners of much of central Europe are Bulgarians; the stop-me-and-buy-one men, Macedonians; the horse-copers, hangmen and fiddlers, gypsies; the itinerant besom-binders, Slovaks. Some villages from Albania, the Rhodopes and Hungary consist almost entirely of masons and bricklayers. The male population of one such village in south-west Hungary built much of the new Turkish capital of Ankara,

except perhaps Bohemia, been political outposts of the Reich, but loyal and contented citizens of their respective states. But they formed a natural foundation on which to build further, and as they had the greatest experience in the arts of peace, as well as the closest natural connections with the western world (towards which most trade was directed after the discovery of America and the fall of Constantinople); as, moreover, the areas most suitable for industrial development were those in which, by chance or design, Germans were settled, they inevitably received the lion's share of the increase when trade and industry developed in the Habsburg dominions, which they began to do at the end of the eighteenth century.

The Germans therefore came to possess most of the wealth, as well as most of the political power, in Austria. They alone, in the group of lands which we are now considering, possessed a national structure which was completely integrated. The Slovenes remained peasants and woodcutters, led only by their priests; so, too, the Rumanians of the Bukovina. The Czechs were reduced to the same position after the seventeenth century; only when the industrialization of Bohemia was fairly far advanced and the manufacturers began to look for cheap labour, did they and no mean proportion of the newer buildings in Park Lane. But it remains true that the three great middle-class nations were the Germans, the Jews and the Greeks; with the Armenians a bad fourth. For that matter, trade (although not industry) in German-Austria itself was largely in Jewish hands.

develop a large industrial proletariat, and a lower middle class of their own; which latter furnished great numbers of recruits to the lower and middle ranks of the administration, for which the Czechs showed an especial penchant. The upper and middle classes in both the Czech and the Slovene provinces were largely German. It is true that these classes formed only a small proportion of the total population in these districts, since the inequality of social development was not only between nations, but also between areas.

When the national revival began among the peoples of Austria, it largely took the form, among the Czechs and Slovenes, of a struggle for social equality—a campaign, carried out by the Czechs, in particular, with great tenacity and success, to oust the Germans from their social, economic and political hegemony and to develop their own national-social life. This gave their movement a strongly democratic tendency, the effects of which can be seen in the Czech nation to-day. It must be added that the hopeless difficulty of ever reaching a settlement on the national question was—and is—largely due to this fact that it was also a struggle against social inequality, carried out under conditions which were constantly changing to the disadvantage of the possessing classes. No settlement could ever be satisfactory. If based on the *status quo* or (as the Germans were inclined to try) on the past, it would be inequitable in ten years' time; while no class or nation has ever been willing to accept terms

based on the assumption that they will be weaker in the future than at the time of negotiation.

In the first phases of the constitutional struggle, the Slavs, as the weaker party socially and politically, demanded only equality of linguistic and other rights. Later the Czechs revived, and maintained very stubbornly, a claim to restoration of the rights of the old 'Lands of the Bohemian Crown', i.e. federalization of Austria on the lines of the old historic units, which would have given them national hegemony in Bohemia and Moravia. The Slovenes also from time to time suggested, although with less conviction, the erection of a 'Slovene Kingdom' as a unit of the Monarchy. The Germans, on the other hand, as the largest single nationality in Austria, with important minorities in many non-German lands, and particularly in Bohemia-Moravia, naturally wanted a centralized regime, with a limited franchise based on property, which would secure their position throughout Austria. In their eyes the rights of the Bohemian Crown were not only politically inapplicable to the later situation, but had actually been superseded in law by the subsequent centralization, which had indeed been sanctioned by the consent (albeit enforced) of the various Estates. A paradoxical situation thus arose, for federalism was also supported by the great land-owners and priests in the country districts, who wished their properties and the morals of their underlings guarded against the liberalism and even socialism

which were developing in Vienna. Thus the non-Germans, whose movements were essentially a revolt against the possessing nation classes, found themselves in alliance with the most extreme representatives of property. This, however, was an anomaly which was violently ended after 1918, when the Czechs and Slovenes, after shaking off the German supremacy, liquidated the great Conservative interests in their respective countries.

The radical solution of altering the boundaries of the historic units was, as we have said, never tried, breaking down on the natural traditionalism of all parties, as well as the resistance of those nationalities which formed the majority in each unit. Few favoured it, because each hoped that the present or future would bring something better. While the Czechs insisted stubbornly on an undivided Bohemia, although it would have meant leaving a German people half as large as their own at their mercy, the Germans were equally obstinate for an undivided Austria, leaving the Czechs and Slovenes entire under German hegemony.<sup>1</sup> The same conflict of egotisms marked the position in other parts of the Monarchy.

In Galicia, centralization and Germanization were practised for three-quarters of a century after the

<sup>1</sup> In 1848 a few Czechs proposed dividing Bohemia, but the Germans refused. The Germans of Bohemia advocated the division during the World War, but the Czechs then would not hear of it.

Partition; but after that, policy took a different turn. The Germans of the Monarchy looked on the Polish question quite differently from the Czech. Poland had never belonged to the Reich, and Galicia contained no important German minority; moreover, if it were brought into a centralized system, this would then have a Slav majority. The Poles, Ruthenes, Czechs and Slovenes could, if they cared to combine, easily outweigh the Germans. The Germans were therefore only too glad to see Galicia given a separate status, *de facto*, which left the Germans a free hand to deal with the Czechs and Slovenes.

The particular national problem of Galicia arose out of the position of the Ruthenes, who were almost as numerous in the province as a whole as the Poles themselves, and easily outnumbered them in its eastern half. Here was an obvious weapon which Austria could use against the Poles, should the latter prove truculent; nor, in logic and justice, was there any reason for giving the Poles national privileges denied to the Ruthenes. But the Polish aristocracy, which had never been destroyed or replaced, and whose influence at the Austrian court was very strong, maintained with passion the natural and historical right of the Polish element to be supreme everywhere within the frontiers of the old Poland; and it is a fact that in earlier times this position had been established, the old Ruthene aristocracy having Polonized and left the specifically Ruthene element one only of peasants

and village priests. Ruthene nationalism, moreover, might easily prove a two-edged sword, for Russian agitation, which at certain periods was carried on with some vigour, tried to guide it into Pan-Slav and Great Russian channels, while even the third possibility, that it might develop into a Ukrainian movement, connected with that beginning to make itself felt in the Russian Ukraine, was not without its dangers. For Austria, Ukrainian separatism might be less dangerous than Pan-Russian nationalism, but for the Poles it was equally objectionable, since it could hardly fail to lead to a demand for the separation of eastern Galicia (which, apart from historical considerations, also contained important Polish minorities) from western.

In view of these considerations, to which may be added, besides the active acquiescence of the Germans, the support given by Hungary to the Poles, the Austrian authorities hesitated greatly to support the Ruthene cause against the Polish. In 1848 they went as far as planning to introduce complete equality between the two nations and to subdivide Galicia on national lines, but the plan was quickly dropped. In 1871 Galicia received a status which amounted *de facto* to home rule, under a special 'Minister for Galicia', who was always a member of the higher Polish aristocracy. This meant that practically all the administration and higher education were in the hands of Poles and conducted in the Polish language, an inequality of national-social structures being thus



perpetrated which was fully equal to that which prevailed, say, in the Slovene provinces, with this difference that in Galicia the beneficiaries were not Germans, but Poles.

Galicia was also the focus of the Jewish problem in the Monarchy; but this will be discussed later, as it affected the whole Monarchy to a greater or less degree.

All the factors which have already been mentioned in connection with Austria reappear in Hungary, but under conditions so different as to make a separate description essential.

The Habsburgs strove not less persistently to break down the constitution of Hungary than they did that of Bohemia; but Hungary, being larger than Bohemia and not burdened by membership of the Reich, defended her liberties more successfully. She was forced, little by little, to yield on certain points of her independence, and in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to submit to a large amount of government from Vienna which was *de facto* conducted by the imperial authorities; but she almost always managed to salvage her territorial integrity and her theoretical status as a separate part of the Monarchy. It was only for a few years after 1849 that she was completely incorporated in the Habsburg dominions, and ruled with the rest of them, absolutely, from Vienna; and this measure also was cancelled in 1867. In 1918 she still regarded herself as a sovereign state, not con-

stitutionally connected with Austria, but only co-operating with her in certain common institutions; and not only the Crown, but other political factors also, were obliged to reckon with this stoutly maintained Hungarian independence within the 'millenary frontiers' as a very real thing.

Hungary never suffered from Germanization to such an extent as Bohemia. It is true that in the eighteenth century the aristocracy became partially Germanized, and almost entirely estranged from the national cause. At that time, also, the bourgeoisie was largely German. But only twice was an attempt made to govern Hungary by a non-Magyar bureaucracy—by Josef II, after 1780, and by Franz Josef after 1849. In each case the experiment was soon abandoned and the administration reverted to the Hungarians themselves.

Nevertheless, the effects on Hungary of the four centuries after 1526 were even deeper than those on Bohemia-Moravia. For Hungary received the full brunt of the Turkish invasion, and as a result her ethnic composition was radically and, it would appear, irrevocably altered. The central and southern Hungarian plain, formerly an almost purely Magyar district, was practically depopulated during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; on its waste spaces appeared a sparse and entirely new population of Serb and Wallach immigrants from the Balkans. The Slovak and Ruthene districts of the north and the nationally mixed one of Transylvania suffered, on the other hand,

comparatively little from the Turkish attacks, while the Rumanian population of Transylvania was also increased by further immigration from the Danubian Principalities. Other refugees—Croats, Serbs and Wallachs—took shelter from the Turks under the aegis of the Habsburgs. Croats settled up the Austro-Hungarian boundary, while a long, narrow strip—the so-called Military Frontier—was organized along the whole southern frontier of Hungary, peopled with Serbs, Wallachs and Croats, and administered from Vienna by Imperial officers.

When the Turks retreated, the Magyars who had taken refuge in the northern mountains came down into the plains, followed by the Slovaks and Ruthenes—leaving, incidentally, a perplexing zone of mixed population along the edge of the foothills. But there were not enough Magyars to fill the empty spaces of the south; besides which, the Habsburgs, although paying lip service to the Hungarian constitution, were really anxious to weaken this the most truculent of all their subject nationalities. They therefore colonized considerable areas in the south—notably the Bánát of Temesvár—with an extraordinary variety of nationalities, among which, of all those known to continental Europe, the Magyars were almost alone unrepresented: Germans (these in greatest number), French Lorrainers, Serbs, Rumanians, Catalans, Spaniards, Cossacks, Bulgars and Albanians. In the interior of the country, the great landowners (many

of whom, as in Bohemia, were creatures of the Habsburgs, of foreign origin) effected a similar colonization on a smaller scale: sometimes by bringing down Slovaks or Ruthenes from the north, thus merely further entangling the existing ethnic elements, but more often by bringing in German colonists, and thus adding a fresh element.

Meanwhile, the Serb immigration into southern Hungary continued, accompanied by that of other Southern Slav elements (the Šokci and Bunjevci), and the Rumanian into the east. Other Serbs entered Croatia, settling, with the perversity characteristic of such movements, far in the west of it.

By the time this process was completed, although the constitutional façade of the Hungarian state remained proudly unchanged, or but little modified, the whole real basis of the state was changed. The Magyar element had sunk from the 80 % of the total at which it had stood in the fifteenth century to less than 40 % at the end of the eighteenth, and occupied little more than the central lowlands (only the island of the Székely, in Transylvania, surviving as a solid bloc outside this area). The north was mainly Slovak, the north-east Ruthene, the east Rumanian, the south mixed Serb and German; and some of these nationalities, besides constituting local majorities in their own areas, were not greatly inferior in numbers to the Magyars in Hungary as a whole. Naturally, many of these 'nationalities' were now unwilling to accept

Magyar hegemony, in the way that the vast majority of the earlier non-Magyars had accepted it, under conditions which had led to the natural assimilation of most of them. Particular danger threatened for the future on the southern and eastern frontiers, where the political frontiers of Hungary now cut across territory in which the Serbs and Rumanians respectively were in the majority, the larger part of their settlements being outside Hungary. The danger of dismemberment of Hungary from outside the Monarchy could not, however, arise so long as the Turks ruled the Balkans; but danger did threaten Hungary from inside the Monarchy. Even constitutionally, although the Habsburgs never modified permanently, on more than a trivial scale, the frontiers of Hungary, any more than they did those of Bohemia, they in fact largely disregarded the independence and integrity of Hungary for long periods. The Military Frontier, the boundaries of which were altered several times, was administered directly from Vienna until 1873. The Bánát was not only colonized, but administered by Imperial officers for nearly a century, on the plea that it was 'neo-acquisita', i.e. won for the Empire by the Imperial army, and need not be considered as part of Hungary. Transylvania was ruled as a separate Grand Principality, and not finally reunited with Hungary until 1867. During the absolutist period after 1849, the whole country was actually divided into five big areas, very roughly delimited on ethnic lines, and one of

these, the so-called Serb Voivodina, in the south, was given a constitutional status which was linked up with privileges granted to earlier Serbian immigrants in 1691. Hungary denounced all these measures as unconstitutional, but the simple beneficiaries of them saw no reason to rate the constitutional validity of the acts of the Austrian Emperor lower than those of the King of Hungary.

The Slovaks and the Ruthenes of Hungary had not the same possibility as the Serbs and Rumanians of joining sovereign states of their co-nationals outside the Monarchy. They had no such historical basis for their national claims as were possessed by the Croats, or even the Serbs; and the differences between them and the Magyars were also smaller, as a result, partly of their long historical connection with Hungary, partly of the intimate links between the economic life of the areas inhabited by them and the central Hungarian plain, partly of the absence of important religious differentiation (the Slovaks had passed through almost the same religious evolution as the Magyars and were divided, like them, into a Roman Catholic majority and a Protestant minority, while the Ruthenes were Greek Catholics). A majority of the Slovaks and the very large majority of the Ruthenes accepted the Hungarian state, and the supremacy in it of Magyar culture, willingly enough, and Magyarized without reluctance when offered the chance of rising in the world by doing so. But even among them this feeling

was not universal, and in the turbulent years round 1848 there was a strong Slovak demand (and a weaker Ruthene one) for national autonomy within Hungary, if no more. The absolutist regime introduced after 1849 gave some satisfaction to these demands.

Franz Josef restored the Hungarian constitution under the so-called Compromise of 1867, thus implicitly renouncing, for his own lifetime, the right to support further the non-Magyar peoples. But this renunciation, although it made it difficult and indeed impossible so long as Franz Josef lived, and no world catastrophe occurred, for the non-Magyar nationalities to enforce their claims, did not in the least affect the position out of which the claims arose. If large portions of the populations of Hungary continued to, or came to, demand an alteration of their status, they would sooner or later find backers. Serbia and Rumania were only waiting for the chance to incorporate southern and eastern Hungary respectively, and in 1905 the Serbs came to an agreement with the Croat political leaders which opened up the possibility that Croatia also might leave Hungary to join a new Southern Slav State. But in Austria itself the Compromise was not at all universally accepted as the last word. Lawyers and historians had already after 1849 been found to argue that by their rebellion of 1848 (which Hungary had maintained to be no rebellion, but the just defence of her legal rights) the Hungarians had themselves rendered their constitution null and

void, so that any measures taken in contradiction to it were legally justified and could legitimately be taken if politically desirable. Many Rumanians, some Serbs and a few Slovaks in Hungary did wish for such measures, in the form of the abolition of the Hungarian constitution and the abandonment of Hungarian integrity for a complete reorganization of the monarchy on national lines. This was strongly supported in Austria by the Czechs who, claiming the Slovaks to be identical with themselves, planned that reorganization to include the unification of the Czech and Slovak territory into a single unit. It was well known that these ideas found much favour with Franz Josef's heir, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who was deeply hostile both to Magyar nationalism and to Viennese liberalism, and was strongly influenced by the Czech higher aristocracy to which the family of his wife belonged.

The position was not, however, nearly so simple as it was often represented to be; or Hungary would have been dismembered long before 1918. Her shape and geographical structure exercised a strong and natural centripetal influence, and it was neither against their will nor in defiance of natural laws that many of her non-Magyar citizens, as soon as they climbed above the circumscribed horizon of the peasant, adopted the outlook, the political ideals and in many cases the language of the dominant and centrally-situated Magyars. Hungary to-day, 25 years after her dis-



memberment, is full of enthusiastic Hungarian patriots of non-Magyar origin.

The Magyars began to press Magyarization on the country in about 1840, when they first began to undergo a strong national renaissance, primarily a revolt against Vienna, and to be conscious that the 'nationalities' did not all share their views. Conflicts were inevitable. To discuss who was to blame in the first instance is to raise the problem of the priority of the hen and the egg. It is quite certain that many of the non-Magyars were 'disloyal' in looking to Vienna, or even across the frontiers, rather than to Budapest. It is equally certain that the Magyars often behaved with the greatest chauvinism and intolerance; and that while they always alleged that they required only political loyalty, otherwise leaving all their citizens perfect freedom to use their own language, in fact, they insisted that the whole apparatus of the state-administration, all education above the primary, etc., must be predominantly Magyar, and branded as traitors those who insisted on modest rights guaranteed them by the Hungarian laws themselves.

It was the hope of those who directed the Hungarian policy that the non-Magyars would eventually 'succumb to the attraction of the superior Magyar culture', and exchange their nationality altogether for the Magyar. They had some success. Although up to 1918 the peasant masses still remained almost untouched—and untouchable—it was, indeed, only just before 1918

that any serious attempt was made to Magyarize them—yet Hungary had succeeded in Magyarizing the bulk of the upper and middle classes throughout the country, and the industrial proletariat of the centre. Large numbers of Jews and Germans, and considerable numbers of Ruthenes and Slovaks, thus became Magyarized. Thus in spite of the fact that the rate of natural increase of the Magyars was well below that of several of the non-Magyar peoples, the proportion of Magyars (reckoned by language) to the total population rose steadily until, under the census of 1910, it just topped the 50 %.

On the other hand, the resistance of those who did resist—these were chiefly the members of the Orthodox Church, and particularly the Rumanians—tended to grow, and it seemed likely that at any rate in Transylvania, where the Rumanian element continued to increase in spite of everything, the future lay with the nationalities. The changes of population which the Turkish invasion brought in its train were succeeded too quickly by the national renaissance for their effects to be undone.

One result of all this was that the national differentiation in Hungary was even more striking than in Austria. The Magyars, almost alone of the people of eastern Europe, except only the Poles, had managed to salvage a landowning higher aristocracy. Partially Germanized in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and up to the last somewhat 'Austrian' in

politics, owing to its Court connections, this class yet formed a real part of the nation, to which it contributed valuable elements. There was also a large squirearchy, the so-called 'gentry', increasingly, after the middle of the nineteenth century, the leaders of the country. The Magyars had their own peasantry, and an industrial proletariat, which was largely of non-Magyar origin, but had Magyarized naturally in Budapest and other centres. The national weakness lay in the lack of a non-official middle class. Trade, industry and the professions (except that of the law) were in any case sparsely represented in the country, owing to its backward and agrarian nature; and those who engaged in these pursuits were mainly German (Greeks, Armenians and Serbs, who had figured largely in this respect in earlier days had died out or assimilated) or, increasingly after 1848, Jews, who entered the country from Galicia in great numbers.

The other nationalities of Hungary were in a different case. It is a complete misapprehension of the position to say, as is so often said, that the Magyar 'race' ruled over 'subject races' in Hungary; for these words imply a policy of exclusion. The monopoly was one of the Magyar culture—to use the word in its most neutral sense; and a Slovak or a German by birth who was willing and able to accept it was admitted to the magic circle as readily as the Magyar 'by race'. One complaint made by the present generation, indeed, is that the Germans and the Jews, in particular, accepted

their opportunities so freely as to shoulder out the real Magyars, and that without genuinely Magyarizing in internals as well as externals. But the fact remains that no upper or upper middle class not Magyar in form existed or could exist in Hungary, with the single exception of the higher ranks of the Greek Orthodox and Greek Catholic clergy. Others who rose above peasant or lower middle class rank were thereby lost to their nations. Thus the Slovaks, Ruthenes, Germans, Rumanians and Serbs in Hungary remained nations of peasants (of whom the Slovaks, Ruthenes and Rumanians were, owing to the nature of the country inhabited by them, extremely poverty-stricken) with small 'intellectual' middle classes, consisting, in the case of the Rumanians and Serbs, largely of their clergy.<sup>1</sup>

Finally, in this sketch of the Habsburg Monarchy special mention must be made of one other nationality, whose position and influence affected the position of every nation. This was the Jewish. Although territorial rivalries and historical claims did not enter into the Jewish question, it was neither the least difficult

<sup>1</sup> The Ruthenes were Greek Catholic, but their clergy, unlike the Rumanian, was almost entirely favourable to the Magyar cause. The Slovaks belonged to the same Churches—Roman Catholic and Lutheran—as the Magyars, and over the Roman Catholic Church, at least, the Magyars had a fairly secure hold. There were, however, some dissidents, especially among the Lutherans, and these provided many of the Slovak national leaders.

nor the least important national problem, as the Jews were not the least important of the local nations.

The Jewish question became important in the Monarchy only after the Partition of Poland, when Austria acquired, with Galicia, part of the teeming Jewish population which had inhabited Poland since the days of Kazimir the Great. Soon afterwards, Josef II's Edict of Toleration removed many of the disabilities under which they had suffered, and the burgeoning industrial development in Austria, and later in Hungary, offered them opportunities which they seized with the skill native to them. Once they had gained a sure foothold, Jewish influence and wealth grew apace, and by the opening years of the twentieth century the Jews were easily the most influential and the richest people of the Habsburg Monarchy. They controlled practically all its finance, in all its regions; most of its important commerce, again in all regions; most of its industry, outside German Austria; and the vast majority of all its free professions, except the Church. In Galicia and parts of Hungary, there were towns which were 30 %, 40 %, even—a few—60 % and 80 % Jewish. On paper, the Jews were not large landowners, but they rented many estates, usually sub-leasing them to the actual cultivators, and they held mortgages on who shall say how many more. In politics (although supplying Franz Josef with one Foreign Minister) they were chiefly associated with the Liberal, Social Democratic and (in Austria) the

German National movements, but exercised an immense influence on all political life through their control of the Press, which was in large part both owned and written by Jews. In medicine and literature and the theatre they were easily the first of all the nationalities of the Monarchy.

When this process commenced, the Jews did not appear to most of the nationalities of the Monarchy as an alien element. There were periodical outbreaks of anti-Semitism in many places, but except in Galicia and northern Hungary, where the Jews were very numerous indeed, they assimilated rapidly to the majority nationality in whose midst they had settled, adopting its language, its idiosyncrasies and also its political ambitions. In German Austria they supplied the German National movement with all the brains that it ever possessed; in Hungary, they were the chief inspirers and defenders of Magyar chauvinism. Many of them felt themselves and were felt to be an integral part of their respective nations. It was only later, when the strange catharsis of extreme anti-Semitism had been poured into the Danube valley, that those nations cast them out, and found that their national integration was incomplete in consequence; for they had omitted to produce the substitutes from their own midst first, and found extraordinary difficulty in doing so afterwards.

There are two further aspects, closely interconnected, of conditions in the Monarchy, on which a few

more words may be said. We have mentioned the differentiation of social structure which grew up between the different nationalities of the Monarchy. It must be added that in the Monarchy as a whole, the social structure was rigidly hierarchical. The Imperial family stood, indeed, at an immeasurable height above any of their subjects; but below them, the differences between the various social classes were immense also.<sup>1</sup> It is true that the Monarchy not infrequently employed men of quite humble origin as servants; the Roman Catholic Church, in particular, but also the army, offered openings to very poor men, concerning whose origin no question was raised. But the higher aristocracy wielded immense influence, while the bourgeoisie were a political power only in Vienna, and the peasants and workers nowhere. In the reaction which followed the World War, this hierarchy was overthrown wherever it conflicted with national ambitions, and also, for a time, in Vienna; preserving itself, to some extent, only in Poland and Hungary. Nevertheless even to-day, and even where the revolutions occurred, the effects of four centuries of the Habsburg social system are perceptible in the comparatively backward state of the peasants and workers, in the strong hold still retained on the former

<sup>1</sup> Of Prince Windischgrätz, who led the reaction in 1848-9, it is related that even on the most informal occasions he spoke of himself in the royal plural, 'at the same time making a deprecatory bow to any archdukes present'.

by the clergy, and in the formidable difficulties which have been encountered in instilling the democratic spirit even into those classes which ought to benefit by it. Of all the Danubian peoples, only the Czechs have succeeded in creating anything like a democracy. The rest either stuck to their old hierarchies, or relapsed into despotism.

This position could not have maintained itself as it did but for the backward economic development of the Monarchy, for although the Habsburg territories were economically far in advance of those ruled by the Turks, they were always, at any date, far behind western Europe, northern Italy, or even the western and central parts of Germany. The backwardness was, again, due in the main to the invasions of the Turks and their predecessors. There were, indeed, other contributory factors: the Thirty Years War, which wrought exceptional havoc in one of Austria's richest provinces, Bohemia, and the religious wars in Hungary, together with the unfortunate geographical position which prevented Austria from sharing in the fruits of the Atlantic trade which brought so much prosperity to the west. But the cutting of the old trade routes to the east, which occurred almost simultaneously with the discovery of America, was, after all, directly due to the Turkish invasion; and this carried on the work begun by its predecessors in spreading destruction and in necessitating the devotion of an inordinately high proportion of the government



revenue to purposes of defence. This hampered the accumulation of resources for productive purposes, and the prevailing insecurity prevented the development of trade and industry which would have created wealth, thus perpetuating the vicious circle. From its earliest days Austria has been military rather than commercial, as the paucity of its towns and their poverty in ancient buildings, as compared with central or western Germany, bear witness.

Up to the late eighteenth century the whole Monarchy was still overwhelmingly agricultural, and those parts of it which had been most devastated in the Turkish wars were in little better state than the Turkish provinces themselves. Lady Mary Stuart Montague's description of her journey through Hungary makes almost as dismal a record as that of Kinglake through Serbia. Maria Theresa and Josef II made considerable efforts to industrialize the western part of their dominions, but the encouragement given to the German-Austrian provinces and to Bohemia was not extended to Hungary, which was, on the contrary, deliberately kept, by means of differential tariffs, as an agricultural country and source of raw materials for the Austrian industries—a measure justified as the only way of getting out of Hungary (through the tariffs) a proportionate share of revenue, since her noble class refused to renounce its traditional privilege of freedom from taxation. As regards trade and industry, she was probably more backward at this

period than in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. Austria, however, undoubtedly benefited by the big internal market which Maria Theresa created when she united all her Danubian dominions except Hungary, the Tyrol, and the free cities of Cracow, Brody and Trieste, in a single customs unit, and the Continental Blockade gave a further stimulus both to Austrian industry and Hungarian agriculture. At the same time, however, the Napoleonic wars threw the Monarchy's finances—always weak—into complete confusion; and the Napoleonic wars were followed by the ultra-obscurantist reign of Franz I, who deliberately hindered economic progress lest it should bring enlightenment, and enlightenment revolution. This was followed in its turn by the series of wars with which Franz Josef celebrated his accession to the throne.

The Monarchy's last half-century of existence was, on the whole, peaceful, and during this period much leeway was made up. Vienna became a big trading and financial centre, and important industries developed round the capital, in Bohemia and Austrian Silesia, and, to a smaller extent, in other parts of the Monarchy. The paper and timber industries, the heavy industry of Styria and the Bohemian Erzgebirge, Hungarian flour-milling, Bohemian glass and textiles, Viennese luxury industries, gave employment to many workers and were on the whole well organized and efficient. But although paying, as a rule, much lower

wages than those current in central Europe, most of the industries of the Monarchy still produced at higher cost than their competitors in Germany or England, and were only preserved from ruin by high tariffs.

Nor did industrialization proceed far. The discriminatory tariffs against Hungary were abolished after 1848, when the whole Monarchy was included in a single customs union, a situation which continued *de facto* until 1918. But Hungary by now needed actual protection, even from Austria, if her industries were to develop, and as late as 1910 68·6 % of her gainfully employed population was still engaged in agriculture, while for Austria herself the corresponding figure was still 53·08 %. And although parts of the Monarchy, notably the wheat-farming areas of central Hungary, were farmed on modern lines and did an important export trade, most agriculture in the Monarchy was exceedingly backward, producing low yields at comparatively high cost. Large districts had, indeed, hardly emerged from the primitive stage of self-contained peasant economy whose connection with economic life consists at the most of a weekly visit to the local market town. A few enormous individual fortunes were made in the Monarchy (mainly by big contractors for the Government), but the mass of the population, agricultural and industrial alike, lived in great poverty. During the last years before 1914 the consumption per head of the population was only three-fifths of that of Germany in meat, sugar and

tobacco, one-half in cotton, two-fifths in beer, one-third in coffee, less than one-quarter in coal. Compared with the United Kingdom, it was four-fifths in wheat, three-fifths in meat, one-third in beer, one-seventh in coal, one-eightieth in tea. It is even doubtful whether general standards were rising at all. Except in the areas actually ravaged by war, a certain rude comfort and plenty seem to have prevailed in the eighteenth century. Austrian officials complained that the peasants were too prosperous, and refused to work. There was, above all, little or no land shortage; the population being at that time too sparse rather than too dense, the peasant could usually get as much land as he could till; indeed, in the eighteenth and even in the nineteenth century, peasants were frequently brought in from abroad to cultivate waste areas. The population increased very rapidly in the nineteenth century, and the industrialization by no means absorbed all the surplus who could no longer find a living on the land. A large overseas migration consequently began from the chief congested areas: Galicia, the mountainous parts of Hungary, Dalmatia, parts of Bohemia. This emigration was destined later to become of political importance also. The great European agricultural depression which followed the large-scale importations of wheat from overseas was also very serious for the Monarchy.

Stress is often laid on the natural economic unity of the Monarchy. It is true that neither the imports nor

the exports across the frontiers were large, its foreign trade usually balancing approximately at the low figure per head of the population of about £3, against £12 in France, £13 in Germany, £22 in the United Kingdom. Few commodities regarded as essential by more than a minority of the population were not produced in one or another part of the Monarchy. It is also true that since all Austria had constituted a single customs unit from the late eighteenth century, in which Hungary had been included after 1848, a number of intimate economic connections had developed between its different parts, and a fairly widespread differentiation between their various economic functions. Vienna became the financial centre for the whole Monarchy, the agricultural produce of Hungary went to Austria and Bohemia, Bohemian textiles to Hungary, and so on. In the years immediately before 1914, 70 % of Hungary's exports went to Austria, and 75 % of her imports came from that country. This certainly created many interests in favour of the maintenance of the Monarchy, which in some cases did much to counteract the separatism to which purely national considerations would have led. The industry of the German districts of Bohemia, for example, largely depended on the protection afforded it by the Austrian tariff against competition from Saxony; the Serbian pig-breeders of the Bánát were similarly sheltered against the cheaper products of Serbia.

Nevertheless, too much must not be made of this point. The low figure of the foreign trade was partly due to the complementary economy of the various parts of the Monarchy, but largely also to the low standard of living and consequent absence of effective demand among its inhabitants. Some outlying parts of the Monarchy—the western Alpine provinces, Galicia and the Bukovina—obviously did not belong to the ‘natural economic unity’, and even in its heart, which consisted mainly of the Czech provinces, Vienna and its surroundings and the old Hungary, the position was not ideal. Communications were always difficult and expensive, and the multi-national character of the Monarchy itself militated against economic efficiency. Apart from the fact that inordinate time and energy were wasted on the unsolved political problems, and that economic considerations had again and again to give way to the necessity for placating this or that national and political interest, any large-scale operation involved wearisome toil and expense to circumvent linguistic difficulties, while the variety of local tastes and needs made mass production almost impossible.<sup>1</sup>

There were certainly many in the Monarchy who were not convinced of its economic utility. The agrarians wanted free access to the industrial markets of western Europe, instead of having to serve the poverty-stricken Austrian market and to take its

<sup>1</sup> An Austrian manufacturer of candles made nine times as many types as his English counterpart.

expensive industrial articles. The industrialists complained that their own interests were sacrificed to those of agriculture. Hungary was convinced that her own frontiers formed a much more real natural economic unit than those of the Monarchy; many Austrians thought that they were being sacrificed precisely to the Hungarian connection. Much more was heard of the natural economic unity of the Monarchy after 1918 than before it.

## V

### THE DECAY OF THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE; THE BALKAN STATES

By the end of the seventeenth century, the Ottoman power had visibly passed its zenith. There was, of course, no question of an immediate and general collapse. Long after its peak was passed, the Porte still commanded powerful armies and vast resources. Even outside the main Turkish areas of settlement in Anatolia and Thrace, there were powerful Moslem minorities who resisted change stubbornly and, being as they were in possession of all the instruments of material power, with considerable effect. But the dissimilationist character of the Ottoman regime had drawn a sharp distinction everywhere between the ruling and the subjugated elements, and the barbarity, corruption and inefficiency of the regime in its later stages could not command the devotion of the mass of its Christian subjects. It remained essentially a rule by force, which could not survive once that force relaxed. The protracted character of the dissolution was, indeed, due to external causes much more than to any internal strength. When it began, the very memories of the old Balkan States had almost been lost and the Balkan peoples had been reduced to so weak, ignorant and barbaric a level that not even they themselves dreamed that the *status quo ante* the



Ottoman conquest could be restored. The only conceivable heirs to the Ottoman heritage appeared to be the great empires on its periphery. In fact, Russia and Poland—in the last instance, that is, Russia—occupied the Pontic regions without international opposition, just as Austria recovered the old frontiers of Hungary. After that, however, there came a curious pause. Neither Austria nor Russia ever finally and completely gave up the idea of further expansion at the Turkish expense. From the days of Peter the Great onward—openly, from those of Catherine the Great—a leading aim of Russian policy was to secure control of the Straits, an object which necessarily involved the subjection to Russian rule of all or part of the Balkans. Austria, edged farther and farther out of western Europe, dreamed of finding consolation on her southern frontier. In the late nineteenth century a third claimant appeared in the shape of united Italy, with designs, based on historical and strategical considerations, on the eastern coast of the Adriatic.

But none of these schemes came to fruition, except for Austria-Hungary's last-moment annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The causes were partly internal. Russia was entirely passive for long periods together, in consequence of internal weakness or pre-occupation in other directions. Austria's spells of enterprise were more intermittent still. Maria Theresa declared sweepingly that if Austria were to extend her frontiers to the very walls of Constantinople, she would gain

nothing but 'unhealthy, barbaric provinces, uninhabited or populated by unreliable Greeks, who would exhaust, not add to, the forces of the Monarchy'. Josef II, the medieval imperialism of whose foreign policy contrasts so curiously with his revolutionary modernism at home, for a time harboured different schemes, but died without realizing them. Metternich supported the integrity of Turkey out of conservatism. And although Franz Josef eventually acquired Bosnia, there were by that time both in Austria and in Hungary strong parties which were opposed to any increase in the Slav population of the Monarchy, which must tilt the balance further to the disadvantage of the Germans and Magyars.

But the sharpest deterrent in each case was fear of competition, or of opposition from abroad. For with the weakening of Turkey, the Danubian question entered on a new and, to date, penultimate phase, which was dominated by the Russian factor. Sooner or later every European Power became alive to the danger involved in Russian control of the Straits, and united—as in the Crimean War—to avert it. This consideration affected even Russia's rivals. Austria herself came to see that the King Log of Turkey was preferable to the Russian King Stork, and both she and Italy moved cautiously, not renouncing the hope of pickings for themselves, but snatching them up only when they felt they could do so without Russia's claiming a larger mouthful in compensation.

So the story dragged on, Austria, Russia and Italy sitting round the dish like three poor cats in the adage. Meanwhile the Christian people of the Balkans snatched their chance and gradually and painfully transformed the map of the Balkans into one of nominally sovereign states: Serbia, Greece, Montenegro, Rumania, Bulgaria, and last of all, in 1913, Albania. Turkey drew the consequences, voluntarily renounced the tradition of the Ottoman Empire, and transformed herself into a Turkish national state only after the World War itself.

It was not surprising that by 1914 these states, the oldest of which was a bare century old, while the youngest had hardly come into being, should have failed to shake off the traces of their past; many of which still linger about them to this day. But it is important to realize that most of their chief weaknesses and problems, as well as certain characteristics which did not appear as weaknesses, did, in fact, arise out of their past, and therefore must be modified, and might disappear altogether, with time.

Thus the primitive and undeveloped state of their resources, the backwardness of their communications, the overwhelming preponderance of agriculture—the occupation of 85 % of the population of pre-war Serbia and Bulgaria, and perhaps of an even higher percentage in Albania—and the extreme poverty of those engaged in it, were conditions from which they could not easily liberate themselves and which remain

only slightly modified to-day. Yet the Balkans, outside the Wallachian plains and certain smaller districts elsewhere, are not marked out by nature for agriculture, in the sense that Canada and the Argentine seem to be. On the contrary, large parts of them are extremely barren, and their inhabitants did not in fact live by agriculture before 1914, but largely by industry—but industry in America, whither the able-bodied men emigrated and whence they sent remittances home. Other parts are, indeed, well suited for specialized farming: tobacco-growing in Macedonia, the cultivation of the opium poppy in southern Serbia and the attar rose in the Maritsa valley; the production of fruit, vegetables, poultry and certain kinds of larger livestock. But this production requires to be supplemented from other sources, to meet the pressure on the land of the rapidly increasing populations; and most of the Balkan countries possess large natural resources in minerals, oil, timber, etc., the exploitation of which could easily absorb most of their surplus populations and bring much prosperity to their countries. Here, therefore, the past has dominated the present up to our own day, and still weighs heavily on it; but the future need not regard any of these conditions as invincible.

Nor was the social structure which emerged after the disappearance of the Turkish rule unalterable. Over most of the Balkans, the radical character of the national revolutions left the slate commendably clean.

The whole aristocracy and officialdom, being Moslem, was simply swept away. Greece, that nation of traders and priests, emerged with its own middle class; but in Bulgaria, Serbia (including Macedonia) and Montenegro there was little left except peasants. The national middle classes which grew up—the armies, which in those disturbed times played the most important role, the officials and priests—were drawn from the peasantry and connected with it. These classes have largely conducted the policies of their countries, often in a very arbitrary and violent fashion, but a certain sense of social equality has survived to this day, the hierarchical pseudo-feudalism of central Europe being entirely absent.

Bosnia, where the large landowners had saved their estates by embracing Islam, and had been left unmolested by Austria-Hungary, was largely brought into line with Serbia after 1918.

The position in Albania and Rumania was different. In Albania, the antique clan system survives to this day: an islet of exceptional conditions which cannot be discussed here. In Rumania, a landowning aristocracy which was largely of Greek origin survived the Turkish period, afterwards allying itself with the Jewish and foreign interests which exploited the oil-fields. Here again, the peasantry form the overwhelming mass of the population, and after two agrarian revolutions—one the most savage jacquerie of modern history—and a belated agrarian reform,

they may end by establishing a system similar to that of Serbia and Bulgaria. This is, indeed, probable, for the landowners and capitalists are largely resented as an alien element; so that the revolutionary movement has been national as well as social. If Rumania ejects her upper class, she will only be doing what Serbia and Bulgaria did a century ago.

The Balkan peoples as a whole thus present a peculiar social structure, based on the peasant and imbued with the peasant psychology to a unique extent. Well organized and guided, this may, in its further development, produce something very valuable for Europe. But it will certainly develop. The Balkans cannot remain for ever peasant countries economically, although they can avoid turning into countries of large landed proprietors. So, too, they cannot always remain peasant countries socially.

The national problems of the Balkans arise directly out of the past; although in justice to the Turks, we must, as we have seen, agree that the Turkish rule, although it complicated them and postponed their solution, did not create them. But the conditions which we have described undoubtedly made it difficult for the Balkan nations, and especially those belonging to the Southern Slav family, to share out the Turkish heritage peacefully on the basis of *suum cuique*. Macedonia, Thrace, the border country round Piro, the eastern parts of Old Serbia, were all debatable country, the objects of rival historic claims, inhabited

by mixed populations, and above all, by populations whose national allegiance was doubtful. Only a long period of settled rule within one or another state could crystallize the national feelings of these peoples, making them consciously and unmistakably Serb, Bulgar, Greek or Albanian. Montenegro was another difficult case. The population, although largely Slavized Illyrians by origin, spoke Serb, but by a historical accident had preserved semi-independence under a national ruler while Serbia was still subject to the Turks. Whether, then, Montenegrin constituted a separate nationality, or whether Montenegrins and Serbs were one people, was a genuinely debatable question.

Unhappily, these questions also are still alive to-day. One solution was found in 1919 (in part only confirming decisions reached by earlier wars), which was in part just, in part unjust, in part necessarily decided in one sense between two claims, each valid. It left behind some justified bitterness, and some that was not justified. In 1940 Germany and Italy, allying themselves with the malcontents, exactly reversed the position established 20 years earlier. They corrected one or two real injustices, they perpetrated more, they reopened many old wounds which had half-healed. The whole problem will face the future Peace Conference afresh.

The Balkan States, then, were anything but ideal. They were poor, backward, corrupt, bloodthirsty.

Moreover, they quite obviously did not fulfil their international role of blocking the road to the Straits and the Mediterranean. Their small size, their poverty, their mutual conflicting ambitions, delivered them as easy prey to their large neighbours, who pulled the strings guiding their policy and made of them (to change the metaphor) stepping-stones towards their own unabandoned goals.

And yet it was impossible for disinterested observers not to feel that their creation had marked a step forward which could not be reversed without disaster. The solution for their problems lay in adjusting their differences, increasing their prosperity, strengthening their independence; not in subjecting them anew to a foreign rule against which they had revolted so decisively.



## VI

### THE DEATH-AGONY OF AUSTRIA-HUNGARY

The decay of the Ottoman Empire was, however, only the prelude to something more serious still: the decay of the Habsburg Monarchy. The same fundamental factors were present in both cases. Each Empire had been the product of force, exerted either directly, through conquest, or in the milder form of an overwhelming necessity to accept a lesser constraint in order to escape a worse. That compulsion, in the case of Austria, had been the Turkish danger, and by removing this she had herself abolished the conditions which had created the Monarchy itself and had furnished the chief traditional argument for its continued existence. •

The mysterious force of nationality had destroyed the Ottoman Empire in Europe, and the same force now threatened its ancient adversary. It threatened it from both outside and inside its frontiers. From outside, because owing to its historical development, its frontiers on almost every side now cut across the lines of ethnic settlement, containing inside them populations whose kinsfolk on the farther side were forming their own national states: Germany, Italy, Serbia, Rumania. Only the Polish and Ruthene frontiers formed an exception here, and even this

only a partial one: the frontier divided populations, but these were not independent on either side of them. Each of these national states worked with greater or less consistency to incorporate within itself the elements within the Monarchy which it claimed as its own in the name of nationality.

Inside the Monarchy things were no better. Once the 'force of nationality' awoke and was able to express itself, there was hardly a quarter from which the Monarchy was not assailed as an anachronism, a prison and a charnel-house. Its disruption was freely prophesied and openly desired by considerable parties among every one of its component nationalities; so openly and so noisily, that to those who read the political literature of the nineteenth century, from 1848 onward, the abiding wonder must be not that the Monarchy dissolved in 1918, but that it did not perish long before.

Yet survive it did, without even much diminution, on balance, of its size and apparent strength, for decade on decade after its demise had been foretold. There are few things in history more remarkable than the adaptability and elasticity of that apparently clumsy mechanism, the Habsburg Monarchy. From Prince Eugen's victories over the Turks to the Treaties of Saint Germain and Trianon, more than 200 years elapsed. During them the Monarchy lost ground, it is true, in the west. Silesia, then the Netherlands, were wrested from it, and also its ruler's proud title of Holy

Roman Emperor. The supremacy in Germany passed to Prussia; the Italian possessions, save for a tiny remnant, vanished into the maw of united Italy. And yet while all this was going on, the area over which the Habsburgs ruled scarcely diminished. Instead of Silesia, their officials now sat in Galicia, Lodomeria, the Bukovina; instead of Lombardy and Venetia, in Dalmatia, Bosnia and the Herzegovina. The Holy Roman Emperor became the Emperor of Austria. Driven out of the west, the Monarchy simply ensconced itself, without apparent discomfort, a little farther east.

What were the reasons of this obstinate and unexpected vitality? Partly, of course, we must realize that the national onslaught was gradual, reaching its peak only in the twentieth century. Neither united Germany nor united Italy existed before the latter half of the nineteenth century, and both Serbia and Rumania were before 1914 small and primitive organisms, on a lower cultural and economic level than the Monarchy, and thus hardly able to exert an unqualified attraction on it. Nor did national feeling awake fully among the more backward peoples of the Monarchy itself until the growth of economic development and the spread of education on modern lines.

Besides this, the regime had established immense vested conservative interests during previous centuries. There was the dynasty itself, with its august and unique tradition, and gathered round it, and carefully trained to its service, a vast body of men whose

traditional and inculcated loyalties, as well as their interests, bound them to the maintenance of the Monarchy: bureaucrats, soldiers, priests. There were also strong business interests, which depended on the maintenance of the free trade area within the Monarchy and of the tariff barriers round it.

But these, except perhaps the last-named, were retarding and not constructive forces, and precisely the effect of nationalism was to sap their strength and to reduce their numbers. Even the officials and business men were not immune from national feeling. The essence of the Austrian problem lay, in fact, in this: that national feeling could no longer be overridden in favour of a supernational dynastic loyalty, and that Austria could therefore survive only if she could prove that she both possessed a mission which she could fulfil in a way that her component nationalities, left to their several devices, could not; and that she could achieve this by harnessing, co-ordinating and satisfying, not repressing, their national ambitions.

There were many who believed that the mission was there, and particularly since the Monarchy had become a specifically Danubian Power. They believed it even with passion. Not Jerusalem itself was called to repentance more fervently and sincerely than the Habsburg Monarchy; and its faithful included not only the dynasty and the Court, but subtle and ingenious thinkers from the most varied walks of life, including, not least, Socialists, who thought to see in

it the possible framework for a state which should conquer nationalism by transcending it. The *raison d'être* of the Monarchy had, they argued, always been something much more than military and dynastic. The very fact that it had now completed what had for centuries been its chief task imposed upon it fresh duties, worthy of a great Power and such as only a great Power could achieve: to reclaim for civilization and well-being millions of desolate acres and brutalized peoples. Without help, without the guidance of trained officials, the enlightenment provided by a Church possessed of the wisdom of ages, the capital accumulated in the wealthier parts of the Monarchy, these enormous tasks simply could not be fulfilled. Nor could they be fulfilled without that special experience of mixed ethnic conditions which Austria alone possessed.

Further, conditions in the Danube valley had grown so complicated that the omelette could simply no longer be unscrambled without disaster. If the historic units were restored—that was the aspect of the case which suggested itself first, since the initial revolt was led rather by the political leaders of those units than by the nationalities—then the fate of the national minorities would be far worse than it was in the super-national Monarchy. If, on the other hand, the Monarchy was repartitioned on ethnic lines, there would be resistance (often felt to be justified) from those whose historic claims were overridden; and since

a clean cut could not be made, the problem of national minorities would still remain.

And finally, if the Monarchy disappeared, was it even certain that national states would take its place? All of them were bound to be small and weak. Would they not soon be engulfed either in Germany or in Russia? Was not the continuance of Austria essential to the security of her peoples? And from the wider standpoint, had not Austria now succeeded Turkey in her role of guardian for Europe of the Danube mouth and the Straits? This last consideration weighed heavily with the other Powers. Above all, the danger from Russia—which in the nineteenth century appeared the most prominent—governed German policy, so long as Bismarck directed it. Bismarck, as is known, regarded Germany's European ambitions as fulfilled in 1870. He did not want to expand further south-eastward. Had he yielded to 'Grossdeutsch' clamours, he might have annexed all that part of Austria which had belonged to the old Reich, but what would have been the next step? To have annexed Galicia would only have brought embarrassment, since that province could neither be assimilated nor granted an autonomy which was refused to Prussian Poland. It could hardly stand alone, and perhaps Hungary could not either. One or both territories would fall in the end to Russia, and the whole operation would have ended by bringing much greater profit to Russia than to Germany. This was the consideration which

notoriously prompted Bismarck in 1866 to conclude with Austria one of the most favourable treaties of peace ever granted to a beaten enemy, and to hasten thereafter to transform her from enemy into friend and ally.

But Russia was not, of course, the only factor. There was now Germany herself, who had taken Austria's own place as the potential danger from the north-west. As the century drew to its close, as the danger presented by united Germany to the European balance grew more apparent, and as Bismarck's successors abandoned his quiescent policy for one of expansion and adventure, the necessity of an effective barrier on the Danube against Germany grew ever more apparent. And here, of course, Austria's curious dual position made it possible to view her in two opposite lights. On the one hand, she had little reason to love Germany, and much to fear from her. The complete national unification of Germany must entail the break-up of the Monarchy and the fall of its dynasty; and the majority of its peoples were non-German. Thus out of sheer self-preservation it would resist Germany, and it was, after all, a sufficient Power to be able to hope to do so with some prospect of success, whereas the component nations were so numerous and individually so small that none of them, or no combination of them likely to come into being, could hope to do so. Furthermore, its dissolution would inevitably add largely to Germany's area and population.

The other party argued that Austria was after all a mainly Germanic Power, in that its dynasty and the most important, although not the largest, element in its population were German; while to them might be added, as sure political allies, the Magyars, for whom only the German support could save that hegemony which they valued so highly and without which they could, indeed, hardly exist. Further, Austria was in reality so weak, so inwardly rotten, that she could not resist Germany if she would, but was doomed willy-nilly to the position of 'brilliant second'. It was therefore futile to hope that she would ever act as a counter-weight or a barrier to Germany. The only safe policy, which was also the only one consonant with the ideals of democracy and national liberty, was to shatter her (or to let her shatter herself) and to build up a fresh structure, taking as basis those elements on which reliance could be placed.

Each of these two policies had its adherents, and it was not until the middle of the World War itself that the latter definitely gained the upper hand. As late as the autumn of 1918 the dissolution of the Monarchy was still not a proclaimed part of Allied policy. Even so late as this, much of the outer world would have sighed with sincere relief if Austria had genuinely solved her national problem and consolidated herself. Rumania and Serbia felt otherwise, perhaps Italy; but there were few, if any, countries, Germany and Russia not excepted, which would not gladly have left



the Monarchy as a whole subsisting if they could have their own particular cut off it. And these considerations were widely, although most often tacitly, appreciated inside the Monarchy itself: not only by theoreticians, but by the peoples. Few of them could be quite certain that they would gain more than they lost by the disappearance of the Monarchy. Of them all, only the Italians, it seemed, had hardly anything to fear. The proposed operation, in their case, meant simply completing Italian unity by extending the frontiers of Italy to include the Italian-speaking districts adjacent to it; and few Italians thought that this would be either dangerous to Italy, or anything but advantageous to the Italians of Austria. There were three other nationalities which might hope to join the national states of their kinsfolk: the Serbs, Rumanians and Germans. To these might be added the Croats and Slovenes, if both they and the Serbs succeeded in merging their separate national feelings in the wider Yugoslav nationalism. But although there was much in common between Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, there was also much to divide them, and even the Serbs of Hungary themselves, and the Rumanians, were bound to reflect that independent Serbia and independent Rumania might embody a national ideal, but were not ideal in most other respects. They might even fail to secure even these moderate blessings and find themselves directly under the Magyars. For the Slovenes the prospect of Yugoslavia was a particularly

remote one, for it was long the accepted assumption that if Austria disappeared, Greater Germany would inherit all those parts of it which had of old belonged to the First Reich, including not only the German-Austrian provinces, but also the Czech and the Slovene. The Germans, on this assumption, had not to fear coming under Slav rule; but they would have had to step down from the privileged position which they occupied in the Monarchy and accept the leadership of a Prussia, which none of them liked and most of them felt to be spiritually more alien from them than their own Danubian neighbours. Had they foreseen the situation which actually arose in 1919, it would have been even less agreeable to them.

The Magyars had no one to join outside Hungary, but their own Hungary was a considerable country, and the more sanguine among them—and the Magyar nation is naturally sanguine—hoped and believed that they could become independent of Austria without endangering their political system or their territorial integrity. But the more thoughtful among them were by no means assured that Hungary unaided might not end by losing at least her Rumanian and Serb territories, or at best have to transform herself into an association of equal nations. She might even suffer worse things: she might be swallowed up in Germany or Russia. For the Poles, failing some extraordinary intervention of Providence, such a fate was the only one which they could expect. The Slovaks and

Hungarian Ruthenes, and perhaps the Croats—if the Yugoslav solution were rejected—had to face, as most probable, the prospect of coming under a Hungarian rule not mitigated by the partial protection and ever-present hope of a better future which the Austrian connection afforded them. The Czechs might very well find themselves inside Germany—a far worse prison than Austria; the Ruthenes, in Russia, or else in a national Polish state.

For a very considerable proportion of the peoples of the Monarchy, then, the Monarchy, with all its faults, represented a degree of protection and of national security which was not lightly to be hazarded. Palacký expressed this truth in his famous saying that if Austria had not existed, it would have been necessary to invent her. The unvarying support which the Poles gave to successive Austrian Governments from 1870 onward was a tacit acknowledgement of the same truth; as was the loyalty, unwilling and ungracious enough, but constant, of those who, behind the smoke-screen of Magyar nationalist demonstrations, guided the policy of Hungary. And when, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Habsburgs turned from the policy of attempted unification to that of balance, they found for half a century sufficient support among their peoples—quite apart from the diminishing number of their own loyal servants—to keep the balance even enough for their purposes. Thus the description so often applied to their policy of that era,

'playing off one nationality against another', is not altogether a fair one. It could not have succeeded for even a decade if it had not offered some real advantage even to those whom in appearance it favoured least.

This policy of balance was first used on a large scale in the year of revolution, 1848; but then only as an emergency war measure, and even then only in combination with the old 'kaisertreu' elements. After the revolution had been put down, there was a last attempt, the most radical in all Austrian history, to rule by centralist absolutism. But by 1859 the impossibility of repressing all national feeling equally had become plain, and from that date on until 1918 the government of the Monarchy was based essentially on the system of balance: in other words, on an alliance between the Crown and certain national forces in the Monarchy, against the remaining forces.

For the first, short, but to the historian, absorbingly interesting period, one ally after the other was sought and rejected as insufficiently strong to hold down the opposition, until in 1867 the famous Dualist System (the 'Compromise') was evolved, which remained the constitutional basis of the Monarchy until 1918. The Compromise was, in appearance, a system of unexampled complexity, based on the historic rights of certain parts of the Monarchy, and decorated with a modern constitutional façade. More simply, it was a pragmatic method of securing the maintenance and integrity of the Monarchy by giving the strongest

factors of the opposition so much of their demands as would buy from them, on return, that measure of support that was indispensable if the Monarchy were to exist at all. The strongest factor in the opposition had been Hungary: and the leaders of Hungary now received back their state within its historic frontiers, undivided as its traditional rights required and with the most complete self-government in its internal affairs. Hungary also received an equal voice with Austria in advising the Monarch on his conduct of foreign affairs. In return, she pledged her loyalty to the Crown; abstained from interference in defence, and—a point often overlooked—practised the same abstinence from intervening in the internal affairs of Austria as she required from Austria in her own domestic policy. The Monarch, in his capacity of King of Hungary although not in that of Emperor of Austria, still had a voice in Hungarian domestic affairs, but this was strictly limited by the Hungarian constitution.

Within Hungary itself, the strongest part of the opposition, represented by the political leaders of Croatia, were similarly disarmed by the concession of a separate political status which agreed with Croatia's historic claims. In Austria an element of opposition which seemed likely to be permanent and dangerous was eliminated by the grant of practical autonomy to Galicia, leaving only the two protagonists of the Germans and Czechs, and the smaller fry of Italians, Slovenes, and one or two Serbs, Rumanians, Croats and Ruthenes. These were left to squabble among

themselves, on the basis of a constitution which, it was thought, secured the supremacy of the German element.

Bitterly as the Compromise was attacked, it cannot justly be called an immoral arrangement. It entrusted the public affairs to the strongest elements willing to conduct them within the necessary limits of acceptance of the integrity of the state. All democratic and representative government, which by the institution of the legal opposition admits the impossibility of satisfying everybody at once, is based precisely on this principle, and it may be taken as a tribute to the realities on which the Compromise was founded that it lasted intact for half a century, the first half thereof without serious opposition. In the later stages, when the balance of real forces inside the Monarchy had begun to shift, the opposition grew intense; but it must be admitted that most of the plans for supplanting it could be summed up in the single formula: 'Ôte-toi que je m'y mette'.

Theoretically the Compromise did not even fulfil its regular description of making the Magyars masters of Hungary and the Germans of Austria. In theory, either group could constitutionally lose its supremacy if it ceased to be the strongest factor, and the Germans did in fact lose theirs after twelve years. But in practice the description was true, and it was also true that in Hungary, above all, the Compromise was very inelastic, allowing the Magyars to repress opposition at their will. In any case, it was no more than a balance; it

was not a solution of the national question, and it left in an almost wholly unsatisfied position a very large proportion of the nationalities of the Monarchy: the opposition of the day in inner Austria; the Ruthenes of Galicia, always; the nationally conscious non-Magyars of Hungary, and the Serbs of Croatia, always; and to some extent, the Croats, in so far as the Magyars encroached on their rights, and the Magyars themselves, in so far as the Crown encroached on theirs; both of which things, especially the former, occurred regularly and frequently.

Certainly the position grew more and more difficult as the years passed, and particularly after the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina. This made the position of the Monarchy vis-à-vis Serbia practically intolerable, and it was little better as regards Rumania. It was arguable that ultimately all Serbs (possibly all Yugoslavs), all Rumanians, and perhaps all Poles, would have to be either included within, or excluded from the Monarchy. Either solution involved a radical alteration of the Dualist System of 1867, and necessitated a readjustment of the relations between the other nationalities of the Monarchy. The Monarchy failed at the last to achieve the inclusive solution, and its dissolution was inevitable, because it had not offered its peoples a solution of the national question. Yet even to-day we cannot regard either as purely visionary, or as incurably imperialist, those who hoped to the last to find such a solution.

## VII

### THE NATIONAL STATES, 1918-1938

If the Habsburg Monarchy confounded its critics over many decades by its obstinate refusal to die, the utter collapse, after a bare twenty years of existence, of the system which succeeded it has probably proved more surprising still, as well as a source of profound disappointment, to many who had hoped that the magic formula for the Danube valley had at last been found.

What were the reasons for this sad debacle? It is true that the death-blow came from outside in the shape of an assault directed primarily by Germany. But it is mere futility to say that the system would have been strong enough to resist if it had not been successfully attacked; for viability implies precisely the power either to disarm or to resist attack. It is not even enough to say that stronger support from outside would have saved eastern Europe in 1938 and 1940, although it is obvious and tautologous to say that an overwhelming outside force in favour of the *status quo* would have preserved it. But the ideal which the treaty-makers hoped to achieve was not a structure, unstable in itself, which had to be propped up by titanic efforts from outside, but rather something possessed of inherent vitality and solidarity. And in fact, when the test came, the solidarity was conspicuously lacking and the vitality insufficient.



The great merit of the Peace Treaties, which also seemed to be establishing something likely to endure, because in accordance with the general trend of historical development, was in the complete satisfaction which they gave in a number of cases to the principle of nationality: detaching parts of the Monarchy which adjoined national states already in existence—Italy and Rumania—or created (or re-created) under the Treaties—Poland and Yugoslavia—and introducing the same form of the national state into the rump states of the Monarchy also.

As we have seen, the national principle had been struggling towards this consummation for many decades, against the opposition, inside the Monarchy, of two other forces: the supernational 'Austrian' force of the dynasty and its servants, and the historic claims of certain component parts of the Monarchy, notably Hungary. The settlement of 1919 in principle disregarded these forces altogether, basing itself solely on the principle of nationality, the third party in the triangular contest.

The calculation was that the dynastic and historical forces, being outworn and weaker than the national principle, could not upset a settlement based on the latter. As regards 'Austrianism' the calculation seemed correct, for the dynastic forces, which, as we have seen, had already been on the retreat before 1918, never reasserted themselves seriously, and grew steadily weaker as the years went on. The champions

of historic tradition fought much more tenaciously, but it may well be doubted if their protests would have had much effect if it had proved possible to apply the national principle in practice as fully as in theory.

But here lay the weakness. One of the strongest points against dismembering the Monarchy had been precisely the impossibility of forming national states in an area where the peoples were so mixed, so unequally developed and distributed in a manner so irrational from the economic and administrative point of view. Unhappily, the 1919 settlement found that it could not conjure these difficulties out of existence. Again and again it found itself obliged to make concessions against the ethnic principle to economic, administrative and strategic considerations; in certain cases, even to historical considerations, while in others, notably those of the Ruthenes both of eastern Galicia and of north-eastern Hungary and, to a modified degree, of the Albanians, it admitted the principle that the people concerned were not ripe for independence.

These reservations and modifications were not of a minor character, but very extensive indeed. After the whole basins of the Lower Danube and the Vistula had been divided, and the Balkans very largely re-divided, on the avowed basis of nationality, the result was that one-third of the total population of Czechoslovakia was found to consist of national minorities, nearly as high a proportion of that of Poland; one-quarter of that of Rumania; and a very substantial

fraction of that of Yugoslavia; after admitting the thesis that neither the Slovaks of Czechoslovakia nor the Croats and Slovenes of Yugoslavia should be reckoned as national minorities. As against this, nearly one-third of the total number of Magyars were now living in the national states of others, a somewhat smaller but still considerable proportion of the Bulgars, and an uncomfortably large number of Germans; while the Ruthenes had no national state of their own at all, and German Austria was refused the right to join Germany.

The status of these minorities constituted a definite deterioration compared with conditions before 1918, in the areas which had previously belonged to Austria. For Austria had not been a German national state. The Germans had been the dominant element, but the state had not been theirs, but Franz Josef's. Some Germans, living in Crownlands where they formed the local minorities, had been in many respects worse off than the local majorities, and even in the central parliament there had been many governments which had rested on the Slavs, with the Germans in opposition; there had been other régimes where all nationalities alike were held down. In Hungary after 1867 the position had been different. Here the Magyars had established themselves as a true national majority, and the 'nationalities' had been true minorities. But even here there had been a supreme authority, superior to the Magyar nation itself, in the person of the Sovereign.

It is true that Franz Josef, having once made his bargain with Hungary, stuck to it and never again intervened in favour of the 'nationalities'; but even Franz Josef was not quite immortal, and the nationalities could hope with more optimism that the future would bring them better things in view of the known intentions of his heir-apparent, the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

But all the successor states were explicitly national states, and once they were established no minority could hope for redemption except in the extremely unlikely event that Article XIX of the League Covenant could be set in operation. A minority was fated to be a minority for ever, dependent on the good will and good sense of the local majorities. There was still an outside court to which appeal could be made, in the shape of the Council of the League, whose aid could be invoked through the Minority Treaties. But these again proved broken reeds, for a sovereign state has at least this advantage, that it can put up a very effective resistance against outside intervention from a League of Nations unwilling to use any sanction except 'the sanction of public opinion'. And even this was not applied very frequently in support of the Minority Treaties after the States signatory to the Treaties had come to be regularly represented on the Council.

Thus it was true that under the new system a larger number than ever before of the peoples of eastern Europe enjoyed complete national liberty. This con-

stitutes the great and abiding merit of the system. But it remained after all a restatement of the position, a modernized and improved restatement, perhaps, but still a restatement and not a solution. It still only satisfied some at the expense of others; and the losers both constituted an uncomfortably high percentage of the whole—and a particularly truculent, energetic and influential part at that—and were placed, as regards the greater part of them, in a position which could not be regarded with equanimity.

An especial weakness of the settlement, and a major contributory factor towards its instability, was its one-sided character. Many of the accusations of ignorance made against its authors are unjustified. But it is true that where one claim, ethnic, historic, economic or strategic, had to be set against another—and such cases were innumerable, ranging from the allocation of a tiny strip of land where a tongue of ethnic settlement ran across a minor railway line, to that of the whole of northern Hungary, western Bohemia, eastern Galicia, Macedonia and German Austria—the benefit of the doubt was almost invariably given to the same side. The Rumanians, Czechoslovaks, Yugoslavs and Poles received almost complete satisfaction of their claims, while the Germans, Magyars, Bulgars, Ruthenes and Albanians were almost always the losers.

This brought in another factor. For naturally, the minorities were not the only dissatisfied parties; and

indeed, not all of them were dissatisfied at all, particularly among those groups, belonging to diasporae, which would have been minorities however the frontiers were drawn. The states which had suffered curtailment, led by Hungary, were equally vigorous in their agitation against the treaties. Whether they were justified or not is a different question; but the fact remains that they had to be included among the forces hostile to the settlement.

The opposition also included a third element. Decisions had been taken at the Peace Conference regarding certain peoples whose national allegiance was doubtful or divided. The Slovaks were regarded as part of the Czechoslovak people, the Croats, Slovenes, Montenegrins and Macedonian Slavs, as part of the Yugoslavs. In each case, except that of the Macedonians, the decision was taken on the basis of an expression of will by representatives of the peoples concerned; and it was well known that a strong movement towards Yugoslav unity, and a somewhat weaker one towards Czechoslovak, had been ripening within the Monarchy. But there had been oppositions to both movements, which now had to be counted among the forces hostile to the settlement, while even the majorities which had genuinely acquiesced in the decisions taken regarding their fate remained thereafter a somewhat uncertain element in their new States.

In judging further the causes of the collapse of the 1919 system, it is only fair to add another consideration.

The settlement washed out the boundaries of the Habsburg Monarchy. As, at the same time, Germany and Russia were relinquishing, by free will or under duress, ownership of their respective parts of Poland and the Baltic States, the whole process took the form of a grand reorganization of all eastern Europe, on the national basis; the Balkan peoples having already begun the work for themselves in the preceding 100 years. This strengthened immensely the national principle, by extending the scope of its application from the Baltic to the Black Sea and the Aegean. At the same time it became very difficult to draw the conclusions from this disappearance of ancient frontiers in some cases, and to refuse to draw them in others. In certain cases it had been assumed without question that the disappearance of the Monarchy would bring accessions to the larger peripheral States. Italy, for example, had been promised a rectification of her frontiers 'along clearly definable lines of nationality' under the Fourteen Points, and no one ever questioned the attribution of the Trentino to her. But Italy was not the only country concerned. The Soviet Union fixed the boundaries with Poland by treaty, and for many years did not question them. Moreover, it was not ostensibly founded on the national principle, and its refusal to recognize the attribution of Bessarabia (by a somewhat informal popular vote) to Rumania was based not on national but on historic grounds. The Ukrainian position was, as we have seen, vague and un-

certain. Nevertheless, the dissolution of the Monarchy clearly removed one obstacle to its future development.

But the most urgent and important of all the problems of this category concerned the Germans of the old Monarchy, of whom (not counting the diasporae in Hungary and Rumania) there were some  $6\frac{1}{2}$  millions in the ethnically homogeneous German-Austrian provinces and some  $3\frac{1}{4}$  millions in Bohemia and Moravia. The Peace Conference formed the German-Austrian provinces into the independent Republic of Austria, and assigned the Germans of Bohemia and Moravia to Czechoslovakia, and thereby incurred bitter reproaches, both from a part of the peoples concerned, and from Germany itself, of having betrayed its own ostensible principles of free national self-determination. It was undeniable that here also the disappearance of the Monarchy had created a new situation.

German irredentism in Austria had, for reasons which have been discussed, come into being almost last of all the national movements in the Monarchy, and up to the end had appealed to perhaps a smaller proportion of the people concerned than any other; while consideration for the Habsburg dynasty, and fear of complications with Russia if the Monarchy disintegrated, had prevented German official policy from encouraging it. But when the Monarchy actually dissolved, the position obviously changed. In Austria itself, the special mission of its German inhabitants



seemed to have ceased, while the sudden snapping of the old economic ties left Vienna, in particular, in a very dangerous economic position. The feeling was therefore bound to spread that the only national future for these people was to return 'Heim ins Reich', and it did not seem that a peace settlement avowedly based on the national principle could refuse this to them. In Germany also the feeling was fairly general that under the principle of national self-determination, the incorporation of German Austria must follow. If, therefore, one defined 'eastern Europe' as the area lying between the indisputably German regions in the west and the indisputably Russian in the east, German Austria no longer formed part of this area. If there was any doubt about the question, this could not be maintained in the face of the clear expression of their will given by the German Deputies of the Austrian Reichsrat, who in the closing days of the Monarchy unanimously voted the incorporation of their territories in the new Germany.

On the other side it was maintained that their long centuries of separate history had moulded the Austrians into something quite different from the other Germans—something distinct enough, in any case, to justify their forming a separate state. Further, even if their old historical mission was at an end, they still had an essential part to play in the new system. The cultural and economic connections of German Austria with the rest of the Danubian states were so intimate that

they could not be severed without irremediable loss to both sides. Even more was this true of the Germans of Bohemia and Moravia, in their narrower sphere. The areas inhabited by them formed an integral part of Bohemia, and it had always been accepted by both Czechs and Germans that Bohemia could not be divided.

Further, it was argued more bluntly still that the safety of the other Danubian peoples, and of Europe as a whole, absolutely required that the Austrian Germans should not join the Reich. Quite apart from the accession of strength which the addition of some 10 million souls would mean to the already formidable military power of the Reich, German Austria drove a wedge into the very heart of the Danubian area, while the settlements of the Germans of Bohemia reached down beyond the mountains which formed the ramparts of that natural fortress into the open and indefensible plain. Thus to allow this union was tantamount to delivering the rest of the Danube into the power of Germany.

It is obvious that the difficult situation here created was not due in its essentials to any act of wisdom or folly perpetrated at the Peace Conference, but to the remote historical causes which brought about the interlacing of the German and Slavonic areas of settlement so that—as you cared to look at it—German Austria appeared as a wedge driven into a Slavonic mass, or the Czech areas of Bohemia as a wedge driven

between Germans. But these things once having happened, it was clear that the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy and the application of the principle of the national state to the Danube basin brought about a dangerous situation, whatever the decision taken. For simply to refuse permission for the Germans of the Monarchy to join Germany could not solve the problem. The decision might be upheld by force, but so long as the will to set it aside existed either among the Austrian Germans or in the Reich, the force required would need to be a very large one. To obtain the willing consent which alone could make the arrangement truly stable was likely to be a difficult operation. It would probably call for very large economic concessions, and even these might prove futile in view of the irrational nature of the spirit of nationality.

Thus what the treaties brought about was not a united front of small peoples, bonded together for the defence of their independence, but an uneasy balance which one side sought to maintain and the other, almost as strong in eastern Europe itself, worked to overthrow, by the help, in each case, of allies from outside. The three chief States which had benefited at the expense of Hungary allied themselves in the Little Entente. Each of these States, and Poland, also concluded alliances with France, and the whole *status quo* also enjoyed the pontifical blessing of the League of Nations. For a time, this sufficed, particularly as

during the earlier period Italy was also a supporter of the *status quo* as regards Austria. Later, of course, the whole system broke down completely, giving way to what on the surface looked like a partition—by annexation or by the establishment of vassal states—of the whole area between Germany, Italy and Russia, this breakdown being materially assisted by the discontented states within eastern Europe itself.

It is not worth while describing the situation thus created, if only because the changes outstrip the attempt to record them. But it is worth while to devote some lines to the activities of the three partitioning Powers, since these reveal, beneath an apparent uniformity, a great variety both of tactics and of objects.

The prime mover and leader in aggression has throughout been Germany. In relation to the Germans bordering on her former frontiers she invoked the national principle, and incorporated them absolutely and unconditionally in the Reich. She had at first said that she proposed to accept the limitations of that principle, as well as its positive applications. Afterwards, invoking a mixture of historical and other pretexts, she incorporated in the Reich the Czech and part of the Slovene territories which had formerly belonged to it. This involved annexing non-German peoples, which contradicted some of the avowed principles of National Socialism, but it was argued that these were special cases, and the racial principle

was safeguarded by degrading the Slav peoples affected to a servile position. The same policy was followed towards the Poles, who, it was said (like the Czechs), could not be trusted to form an independent state on the frontiers of Germany, because they would always be hostile to her.

The peoples farther east were not nominally incorporated in the Reich, but those not thrown to Italy were allotted a role which differed in degree rather than in kind from that assigned to the Czechs and Slovenes. They were to be the economic and political vassals of Germany, supplying her with raw materials and cheap labour, and when required, with auxiliary troops.

In her policy towards these peoples Germany showed an austere impartiality which would have been more apparent than it is, had not the Hungarian Government, playing its cards much more adroitly than its neighbours and covertly supported by Italy, snatched a few special advantages for itself. Germany's own policy has been to divide south-eastern Europe along strictly ethnic lines, thus atomizing it to a high degree. All the local peoples are therefore to be weak, and all equally subservient to the Reich. The extent to which any of them is at any time called upon to render Germany economic, political or military service depends solely on Germany's day-to-day needs.

Italy's policy has been quite different. It may seem paradoxical to describe it as defensive, at a moment when Italy has grabbed almost as much as Germany

herself; but defensive it is. Italy, as Mussolini's policy in Austria showed, fears German domination of south-eastern Europe as much as anyone; and with the best reason. On the other hand, she could not subscribe to the attempted French defensive bloc of Poland and the three Little Entente States, because she felt herself actively threatened by any combination of any strength, if Slavonic in character, and even, specifically, by Yugoslavia. She found herself therefore in a sad dilemma. A weak and atomized south-eastern Europe let in Germany, while a strong one itself threatened Italy. Her policy has therefore been to take as much as she could for herself—the South Tyrol, Istria and Fiume, later the Albanian protectorate, and later still Dalmatia, half of Slovenia and, again, under the form of 'protectorates', Croatia and Montenegro—and for the rest, to strengthen as far as she could those peoples whose interests were identical with hers.

Chief among these was Hungary, which, exactly like Italy, was threatened both by Germany and the Little Entente. A Hungaro-Italian alliance was natural and inevitable, and however represented, was in reality anti-German (in a defensive sense) no less than anti-Slav. Gladly would Italy, unlike Germany, see a Hungary large and strong, and forming a real barrier to German expansion.

A necessary corollary from Italy's point of view to the enlargement of Hungary was the destruction of Yugoslavia. She had no direct interest in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, but was prepared to

accept it if Hungary insisted; but would obviously have preferred it done, not by atomization, but by enlarging Hungary. Rumania, another non-Slav State, she would have liked to see preserved and enlarged, and it was certainly embarrassing to her that the Transylvanian question prevented her from driving Rumania and Hungary in double harness. She tried at various times to square that intractable circle, and there was even a time when she thought of making Rumania, rather than Hungary, the pivot of her policy. Only under the compulsion of events did she let Rumania pass into the opposite camp.

There was one other State, besides Hungary, which had direct interests in common with Italy. This was Bulgaria, which Italy also supported against Yugoslavia, just as she did Hungary. Her policy in the years under review may then fairly be described as the acquisition for herself of as much as she could digest on the eastern shores of the Adriatic, and for the rest, a Hungaro-Bulgarian bloc (if possible with Rumania also included) to hold in check those forces dangerous to Italy—Germany, Russia (should she advance), or a strong Yugoslavia.

There remains Russia, whose policy up to 1939, and perhaps after it, was purely defensive. There was, indeed, no reason to suppose that the U.S.S.R. had permanently renounced the traditional ambition of Czarist Russia to seek an outlet to the warm seas. But during the first years after 1917 it was intensely pre-occupied with internal reconstruction, which prevented

it from embarking on foreign adventure. It had, moreover, to do without some of the trumps that had been in Czarist Russia's hand. Apart from Poland's hostility and suspicion, the governments of the smaller Slavonic states of the Balkans, which had traditionally looked to Russia for support, were unwilling on social grounds to invoke the help of the Soviets. This social antipathy to the Soviet system was shared elsewhere, while the new policy of the Soviets on religious questions lost them the influence which Moscow had previously exercised over the smaller peoples of Orthodox belief, even where non-Slavonic. Finally, the Soviet's policy of economic self-sufficiency made it impossible for it to establish close economic connections with the smaller states west of it, particularly as, if the question of exports arose at all, the Soviet and its neighbours were not mutually complementary, but rivals for the same market.

As a consequence the Soviets were shunned and not courted for 20 years. Of the states east of Germany only Czechoslovakia sought their support, and thereby at once increased the hostility of her neighbours, Poland in particular, without getting any solid backing in return.

In the event, therefore, it was left to Germany to destroy the 1919 system, Italy and Russia from outside (and Hungary and Bulgaria from within) rushing in to pick up what scraps they could, and trying at the same time to fortify themselves against the fate which was overtaking their neighbours. And thus came the end of another chapter; but not of the book.



## VIII

### THE BALANCE-SHEET OF THE NATIONAL STATES

Naturally, however, both the period of national independence and that of German-Italian domination had profound effects on the national, social and economic conditions of eastern Europe. In the national field, a complicated system of hierarchies had, as we have seen, evolved in many districts. The 1919 settlement roughly reversed the earlier positions, with the single exception that the Ruthenes remained national under-dogs after 1919, as they had been before it. The other under-dogs of the past, however, now had their chance, and took it with great vigour, setting themselves with energy and a considerable degree of success to complete their national-social structures by the creation of national bourgeoisies, economic, administrative and 'intellectual'.

This effort involved, of course, violent social and economic upheavals. The new could not grow without loss to the old, the more so as in many cases the new masters found it more convenient simply to evict their predecessors and seat themselves in their places, than to undertake the labour of new constructive work. Over the territory emancipated from 'Austria' or detached from Hungary, a great and often brutal

clearance was made of the past. The estates owned by Germans in Bohemia, by Magyars in Slovakia and Transylvania, by Russians in Bessarabia, were expropriated and parcelled out, mainly among members of the new dominant nationalities. Officials of the old regime were dismissed, with or without pensions; the control of banks and businesses changed hands; sometimes even the staffs were replaced. Where businesses were left in the hands of the former owners, they were boycotted and impoverished. These things have often been described, and if the description is not repeated here in detail, this is not from any desire to minimize the sufferings involved. But we can concern ourselves here only with general trends and broad results, which we may summarize by saying that those nations which became sovereign in 1919 had by 1938 largely eliminated the traces of the differentiation bequeathed from the Habsburg period. It is true that most of them deliberately abstained from creating for themselves certain social classes, notably that of the large landed proprietors, which the Poles and in particular the Magyars retained. In those countries where there were no nationalist motives to support the cause of social reform, social changes, especially in connection with land tenure, have been carried through much less radically than in the case of the 'liberated' countries. This left a disturbing difference of social structure and outlook which was, however, much less important than the contrasts which had existed before 1918.

In some cases, such as those of the Serbs, Czechs and Rumanians, and, in so far as they were throwing off the relics of Habsburg domination, of the Magyars and Poles, the process of integration was comparatively simple. There were, however, others which were complicated by cross-currents which delayed the completion of the evolution. All of these concern Slav peoples. The Slovaks reacted against the former Magyar rule in exactly the same way as the Rumanians of Transylvania, or the Czechs against German hegemony. The old tendency to assimilate to Hungary stopped. Some of the Magyarized older generation reverted to Slovak feeling, others simply wrote themselves down as Magyars; but the younger generation grew up not merely indifferent but hostile to Hungary. On the other hand, most of them also found themselves unable to accept the Peace Conference thesis of a unitary Czechoslovak nation. Some of them felt this to mean, in practice, domination by the economically and socially stronger Czechs, and they reacted in the form of a flamboyant Slovak nationalism which was a main reason for the absence of revolt with which they accepted the dissolution of the Czechoslovak State. It is a fact that the German 'protection', while depriving them of political independence, gave them more opportunity than they had ever enjoyed before to pursue their national-social integration, and established a distinctive Slovak nationalism as a factor of the Danubian situation.

Something of the same sort appears to have gone on among the Yugoslav peoples. The attempt made by King Alexander of Yugoslavia to abolish all separate Serb, Croat or Slovene national consciousness in favour of a single Yugoslav nationalism proved a failure. Serbs, Croats and Slovenes continued to feel themselves as such; which did not, of course, exclude the probability that they might prefer (as the Czechs and the Slovaks, in their sphere, might also prefer) to enter into a closer association with one another than with any other Danubian peoples, and to accept a political 'Yugoslavism' in the same way in which Scots and Welsh accept the British idea. Trouble arose, particularly among the Croats (the Slovenes enjoyed in practice almost complete national liberty throughout), out of the feeling that Yugoslavia, as it developed out of the Serb-Croat-Slovene State originally designed, did not give them complete equality, nor satisfy wholly their wish for national independence, but subjected them either to a Serb hegemony, which they understood and rejected, or to that of a Yugoslav nationalism the reality of which they denied. The regime established in Croatia in 1941 represented the extreme anti-Serb tendency which was certainly not general among the Croats, accepting as it did the suzerainty of a nation which most Croats regard as their hereditary enemies, but it did express in caricature a particularist Croat nationalism with which future planners would have to reckon.

Whether the Italian attempt to revive separate Montenegrin feeling was based on any reality at all, or whether the Montenegrins—identical with the Serbs in origin, language, religion and customs—had lost all desire to maintain that separate political existence which history and geography gave them before 1918, is a question which the future will doubtless answer for itself. Nor can we prophesy now how far the Bulgarian and Bulgaro-Macedonian rule in Macedonia will succeed in reopening the question of the nationality of the Macedonian Slavs.

The most uncertain case of all remained that of the Ukrainians. As we have seen, Czarist Russia, Austrian Poland and Hungary combined before 1918 to repress Ukrainian nationalism. After 1918 also the Ukrainians received less satisfaction than any other of the larger peoples of south-eastern Europe. Nowhere were they allowed to constitute their own sovereign national state. The bulk of them became citizens of a Soviet Republic within the U.S.S.R. Those who had formerly been Austrian subjects were assigned to Poland; those of Bessarabia, to Rumania; those of Hungary, to Czechoslovakia, this last-named group under the stipulation that 'Carpatho-Ruthenia' should enjoy wide autonomy.

Nevertheless, the position did not remain unchanged. The Soviet Government encouraged the cultural aspects of Ukrainian national life, and the effects of this spread to Galicia. The possibility of

creating a separate Ruthene nationality, which perhaps still existed in the more spacious framework of the Habsburg Monarchy, disappeared from the narrower limits of Poland, where the Ukrainian population, without necessarily wishing to join the U.S.S.R., was now agreed as to its national identity with the population there. Ukrainian nationalism even penetrated into Carpatho-Ruthenia, although confused by a rival Russian nationalism and opposed by other, more traditional, tendencies.

On recovering Ruthenia in 1939, Hungary hastened to reintroduce the idea of 'Ugro-Rusinism'; but even she could hardly hope that the population would be as content as before to Magyarize as soon as it rose above peasant level, and must doubt whether the movement for national-social integration would really proceed on 'Ugro-Rusin' lines. From Galicia the old willingness to Polonize certainly disappeared. The most sinister aspect of the position was the use which Germany was able to make of it, as a weapon against the U.S.S.R., Poland, Czechoslovakia, and perhaps also Hungary, alike.

The whole position in 1939 was thus still one of transition, full of loose ends, of old things half-destroyed and new ones still incompletely broken up. Besides the complicated dual development of the Slovak and Croat nations, the thwarted state of the Ukrainian and the uncertain one of the Macedonian, there had been cases in which, owing to some powerful

external influence—the protecting hand of Germany or the subtler influence of the Holy See—the new masters had failed even in twenty years to reach complete equality with the old. More often the process of reversal had gone too far. The minorities were thrust down into a social and economic position not equal, but inferior to that of the new majorities. Moreover, the areas in which this took place were also geographically larger than a straightforward demand for the levelling up of national conditions would have justified. For the frontiers of the states chiefly interested in levelling up were in most cases drawn well outside the ethnic lines of their majority populations, and yet the new majorities tried to establish their superiority even—indeed, above all—in the frontier zones inhabited by minorities. This was partially corrected in and after 1938, when some frontiers were altered to bring them closer to the ethnic line. On the other hand, in certain places this revision went beyond the ethnic line, and here it is to be presumed that the beneficiaries initiated yet another process of reversal and reinstatement.

After 1938 there came, of course, also the ruthless alien domination of Germany over the Czechs, Poles and part of the Slovenes, and Italian domination over other southern Slavs, and Albanians, creating new positions of inequality which the future will have again to liquidate.

In contrast to the failure of kindred nations,

imagined to be practically identical, to fuse together, the members of those nations which had really derived from the same stocks but had developed along divergent lines owing to different historic influences, tended to sink their differences and to unify. So it was with the three branches of the Poles, with the Rumanians of the Regat, the Bukovina and Transylvania, and with the Serbs of the Old Kingdom and the former Monarchy. So, as we have seen, it is likely to be with the Ukrainians. And as has already been said, it would be only natural to suppose (even if evidence to the effect were lacking) that this would be the case with those Germans of the Monarchy also whose homes were contiguous with the Reich.

The nations which were the losers by the changes introduced in 1919 naturally struggled against them, but even they did not remain unaffected. The new nationalism which has spread over eastern Europe since 1919, but especially in the last few years, is something very different from the old. In part derived from German national socialism, in part drawing similar conclusions from similar premises, it may be described as the determination of each nation to be wholly the master in every walk of life, on the soil which it claims as its own; admitting no elements which it does not claim as its own, either above it or in its midst, either to control it politically or to supply any of its several classes, or to perform for it any social, economic or cultural rôle of 'national' im-



portance. This new nationalism, in contrast to the old, is exclusive and dissimilationist. It rejects all super-national and international factors. In consequence, at the one end of the scale, the old 'kaisertreu' 'Austrianism' has practically disappeared. Already in retreat before 1918, it now hardly exists to-day outside the houses of a few aristocrats (the most venal and least national of all social classes), pensioned colonels and old ladies. No east European in active life to-day could call himself simply a servant of the dynasty, without national allegiance. At the other end of the scale, the devotion of the working classes to the Marxian ideal of the international proletariat has lost almost as much ground. Even before 1918 it was probably rather a dogma among the Jewish intellectuals who provided the brains for the various Social Democratic parties than a deep-rooted feeling among the working masses. After 1918 it flourished best and survived longest in that Social Democratic Vienna which is now no more. The workers of all east European countries are less chauvinistic than their national bourgeoisies, but most of them feel to-day primarily in the terms of their nations, even if they reject the social structures which prevail in those nations.

The almost universal anti-Semitism is another general expression of this new nationalism. Almost every country has decided not only that the share of its national income earned by its Jews was too large, but that their influence on almost every branch of its

national life, including in particular the cultural aspects thereof, was larger than it was prepared to tolerate. This has not been due entirely (although it has partly) to vulgar spite and jealousy, but partly to a sincere feeling that the Jews are after all a profoundly different people, who can never be assimilated, and that their products, in whatever language they are clothed, can never be the national products of the people concerned. The sweeping anti-Jewish measures in which nearly every east European state has recently indulged have both inflicted great sufferings on millions of peoples and have also caused serious economic troubles in the countries perpetrating them. Such a country as Hungary or Poland, which for generations had been accustomed to turn over the conduct of its business to its Jews, has found to its cost that it is much easier to evict Jews than to replace them. The weakness resulting from their attempts to do so has been one of the causes of the easy penetration of German business into such countries. In this respect the future certainly holds many complications in store, but unless feeling changes to a degree hardly to be anticipated, we hardly expect a complete reversal of the present anti-Jewish policies; and the probable future line of development will be the gradual emergence in each nation of a national middle class performing—probably far less shrewdly and far less diligently—the functions formerly exercised by their Jews.

This general stiffening of national feeling made the discrepancy between ethnic and 'natural' frontiers more marked than ever. Where the natural boundaries were retained, as in the case of Bohemia, the positions of the various nationalities concerned remained practically stationary. Where, as in the case of Hungary, they were discarded, the old assimilation of the peripheral elements to the central element stopped, and in the case of the Slovaks, in particular, there was a considerable amount of re-assimilation to Slovak nationality of elements which had been half-Magyarized. But there was little assimilation of real Magyars even here, and still less in such areas as Transylvania or the Voivodina, where national differences were expressed in differences not only of language, but also of religion.

Nor was there much sorting out of the populations from the mixed areas. After the War a compulsory exchange of populations was organized between Greece and Turkey, and about a million and a half of human beings changed their habitations. There was a similar, but much smaller, exchange, on a voluntary basis, between Greece and Bulgaria. Officials and other representatives of an order supplanted under the Peace Treaties left some other areas in considerable numbers; something like 200,000 Magyars left Transylvania alone, and perhaps half as many the other parts of Hungary detached under the Treaties. The number of Germans leaving Poland was even larger. The Turks, Germans and Italians recalled many

of their diasporae, and most of the Serbs of Hungary went home to Serbia. But the great majority of these movements affected only the middle classes, or adventitious elements recently colonized for political purposes. The big 'bodenständig' groups outside the main area of settlement of their nations as a rule held their ground. For that matter, the colonists settled by the Successor States in newly acquired areas seldom prospered, and disappeared, even where not forcibly evicted, from any such areas which reverted later to their former owners, while in these areas also the indigenous populations remained on their lands. For this reason, Hitler's colonization of Poland seems unlikely, judging by precedent, to enjoy any long life.

The other field in which very important changes took place was that of economics. After 1918 the old economic unit of the Habsburg Monarchy was largely dissolved, and its place taken by a series of new economies for which the old political frontiers of the Monarchy had no relevance. The Successor States whose political centres now lay outside the Monarchy—Poland, Rumania, Yugoslavia, Italy and, after 1938, Germany—directed the economic life of their acquisitions so as to centre as far as possible on their new capitals. The economic life of Galicia was directed towards Warsaw, that of Transylvania towards Bucharest, that of the South Tyrol towards Rome and Milan, and so on. The process was partly natural, partly directed by the political desire to end any

economic or cultural connections which might keep alive or revive the desire for political union; whence it followed that it was carried through most purposefully precisely where the new frontiers cut across the closest natural economic connections. But the same differentiation also took place, from the same motives, between those states whose territory lay wholly within the frontiers of the old Monarchy. Czechoslovakia was at equal pains to liberate her economy from that of Austria in the west and of Hungary in the east. Hungary, from revisionist motives, would gladly have kept alive the old connections with her Successor States, but was as anxious as any of her neighbours to free herself from Austrian tutelage.

How swiftly and completely the old economic unity of the Danube valley disintegrated before these efforts may be judged from the fact that in 1929 the percentage of their total foreign trade which the five chief Danubian states did with each other was only the following:

	Imports %	Exports %
Austria	35	33
Hungary	40	57
Rumania	37	31
Czechoslovakia	16	30
Yugoslavia	43	40

Easily the most important of the surviving inter-Danubian trades was, it may be remarked, that between Austria and Hungary, where political antagonism was comparatively small.

This reduction of inter-Danubian trade inevitably involved a reduction of trade as a whole, for the States which thus severed the established economic connections with one another could not reckon on finding at once alternative markets for their own produce, or sources of supply for their needs. The consequent trend towards autarky was reinforced by considerations of national prestige and national security, and in some cases by motives of internal politics, such as the desire of the Austrian provinces to break the power of 'Red' Vienna. Most of the Danubian states were also forced, especially after 1930, to reduce their imports to a minimum in order to meet the heavy foreign obligations which nearly all of them had had to contract in the form of reparations, liberation debts, or loans for refugee settlement or general reconstruction—debts which even if reasonable when contracted, became almost intolerable after the sudden fall of agricultural prices.<sup>1</sup> As the imports were mainly of necessities (since the states were already living well below the luxury standard), there was no alternative but to substitute home products for them, even when this admittedly brought with it a reduction of standards. In this situation the surplus populations, the

<sup>1</sup> In 1932 the total foreign indebtedness (in Swiss francs) per head of the population was 449 for Hungary, 394 for Austria, 292 for Rumania, 234 for Yugoslavia, 141 for Bulgaria and 134 for Czechoslovakia. Czechoslovakia was thus the only Danubian state whose foreign debts did not make up a formidable fraction of its balance of payments.

disposal of which became an extremely serious problem after the U.S.A. Immigration Acts cut down overseas emigration from the Danubian countries to a small fraction of its former figure, had also to be placed in branches of the national economies which reduced the need to import.

All the Danubian countries therefore moved towards autarky; the industrial developing their agriculture, and the agricultural their industries. Statistics are both wearisome and notoriously misleading; and in this particular case exactly comparable figures are rarely obtainable. The broad outlines are, however, clear. The one country which the treaties left as mainly industrial—Austria—made large strides towards agricultural self-sufficiency. Between 1919 and 1929 the average annual harvest of wheat and rye rose by more than 100 %, of barley by 150 %, of potatoes by 200 %, of sugar-beet by 600 %.<sup>1</sup> During this period Austria became almost self-supporting in the main cereal crops, while in milk she transformed a heavy passive balance into a considerable active one.

In agricultural Hungary, on the contrary, the number of workers employed in industry rose from 152,500 in 1921, to 264,300 in 1938. The proportion of the national income derived from industry rose

<sup>1</sup> It is true that the figures for 1919 are affected by the results of the War, while those for 1929 include Austria's acquisition of the Burgenland, so that the difference is not quite so striking as the above figures seem to imply.

from 20 % in 1924-5 to 26 % in 1937-8, while the proportion of total imports constituted by manufactured goods fell from one-half to one-quarter. In Yugoslavia the number of industrial enterprises rose from 1391 in 1918 to 4031 in 1930, and that of persons employed in them more than doubled. The picture was much the same in Rumania. Only in Czechoslovakia does the position not emerge clearly from her statistics, as she inherited industrial districts from Austria and agricultural from Hungary.

Not everything in this process was unnatural or harmful. As we have seen, the extreme backwardness and predominantly agricultural character of the Balkans and of the 1918 Hungary were due to historical rather than to natural causes. Some growth of industry in these areas was a natural and healthy process, which brought to some of them an increased prosperity.<sup>1</sup> From the national-political point of view it was probably also desirable that industry should be developed more equally among the different peoples.

<sup>1</sup> Contrary to the general impression, the average standard of living on the Danube did not fall after the War. Mr Colin Clark (*The Conditions of Economic Progress*, pp. 122 f.) gives the following figures for the income per head in international units in 1911-13 and 1925-34 respectively: Austria, 565,511; Hungary, 274,351; Rumania, 298,243; Yugoslavia, 271,330; Czechoslovakia, 411,455; Bulgaria, 479,259. The improvement in the countries in which it occurred is not, of course, to be attributed solely to industrialization, but there can be no doubt that in some areas industrialization was overdue, and brought an improvement where carried through.



The debits, however, easily outweighed the credits on balance; for although the order which disappeared was in some respects unnatural, that which replaced it was, economically, far more unnatural still. The old frontiers had largely evolved in conformity with medieval strategic requirements, which tended to coincide with economic needs, an easily defended frontier often marking also a natural division of economic connections. In any case they had existed for centuries, during which economic life had adapted itself to them. The new lines, with their preponderantly ethnic basis, were on the whole much less economic; besides which, the new units in the Danube valley were smaller than the old, and gave less scope for natural differentiation. Thus the attempted autarky produced results which were, on balance, decidedly more unnatural than those which had evolved within the Habsburg Monarchy. There was, for example, no natural economic basis for the development of Austrian wheat or of Hungarian textiles. Conversely, the budding industry of Slovakia, for which before 1918 Hungary had designated an important role, was largely killed by its (from the geographical point of view) unnatural attachment to Bohemia-Moravia. The new industrial and agricultural production, which was sheltered in most cases by high tariffs and other protective measures, did not supplement the old, since the general level of consumption only increased very slightly, but drove it off the market. The skilled in-

dustries of Bohemia and the excellent agriculture of central Hungary stagnated while Czechs and Austrians ate bad and expensive wheat, and Magyars covered themselves with bad and expensive clothes. Apart from the expense and difficulty of adapting their state economies, particularly when this was being done on economically unnatural lines, the new states also laboured under other handicaps. They were burdened with large numbers of state employees (far more of these being, of course, required for the many small states than for the few larger ones), and, above all, of large armies. An inordinate proportion of their scanty capital was thus devoted to economically unproductive objects. This slowed down their development, so that in fact the twenty years did not greatly alter the position of Danubian economy as a whole relatively to that of the rest of central Europe. Austria and Bohemia-Moravia remained the only areas whose economic structure approached modern standards. The gainfully employed population of Austria, for instance, in the last years before her downfall, was divided into three almost equal groups: of agriculture, industry and other occupations (transport, commerce and banking, administration, free professions, domestic service). In Bohemia the position was similar. But in Hungary in 1930, 53 % of the population was employed in agriculture, 21 % in industry and only 5.2 % in commerce and banking. For Rumania, the respective figures, for the same year, are 78, 7 and 5,

the last-named including also transport; for Yugoslavia (1931) 73, 11 and 4 (and here we must remember that these figures cover not only Serbia and Macedonia, but Dalmatia and Slovenia also); for Bulgaria 80, 8 and 4. Moreover, even these figures may very well be misleading to those who lack first-hand knowledge of the countries concerned. In Yugoslavia, for instance, more than one-third of the persons listed as employed in industry were independent workers, as were over 70,000 of those engaged in 'commerce and banking'. In other words, 'industry' often meant simply the village cobbler or smith, 'commerce and banking' the village shopkeeper or the travelling pedlar. The only places east of the Leitha where anything approaching large-scale economic operations were carried out were still Budapest, the Rumanian oilfields, and a few smaller centres, partly engaged in special manufactures, such as that of Bulgarian tobacco, partly in arms manufacture. With a few exceptions again, such as Rumanian oil, Bulgarian tobacco and one or two specialized Hungarian industries, the local industries produced almost exclusively for the home markets. For their exports all the Danubian and Balkan countries continued to depend to an overwhelming degree on raw materials, and in particular on cereals, or on finished agricultural produce, such as flour and dressed hides. Agricultural produce regularly supplied about 60 % of Hungary's total exports; about the same for Yugoslavia; over 80 % of those of Bulgaria. For Rumania, the figure

ranged between 30 and 50 %, this comparatively low figure being accounted for by the special case of the large oil exports. Above all, it was on the prices which they got for these products that the agricultural producers depended, who formed the majority, and nearly always the large majority, of the populations. If the price of wheat, in particular, fell in the world market, or if the country could not dispose of its surplus, the peasant lost his purchasing power, and as an immediate consequence thereof the local industries lost their markets and the tradesmen their businesses; and wheat, a commodity for which the world demand is exceptionally inelastic, and the supply exceptionally variable, is a particularly dangerous commodity on which to depend.

The general standard of living, in spite of the partial rises which have been mentioned, remained deplorably low. The best of the figures for the post-War period given above compares dismally enough with those of overseas countries such as the U.S.A. (1381), Canada (1337), or Great Britain (1069), or even with France's 684 and Germany's 646. Indeed, of all European countries, only Lithuania and Albania showed lower standards than Bulgaria and Rumania. The U.S.S.R., with 320, came just below Hungary and Yugoslavia, but was rising much more rapidly than they.

An unhappy but inevitable result of the whole development was that the whole Danubian area succumbed economically to Germany as soon as Germany stretched out her hand to take it. We say 'inevitable',

in view of the policies of other states. It was no special fondness for Germany (except in the case of some circles in Austria) which brought about this result. But complete autarky was impossible for any Danubian state in its then condition. Yugoslavia and Rumania might perhaps have come near it if they had had very much longer time to develop and unlimited capital to do it with. Czechoslovakia would have had to face dismantling many of her industries; Austria and Hungary could never have achieved it. As it was, all of them remained dependent on the outer world even more than need have been the case, had they been less reluctant to trade with each other. The alternatives left before them were Germany, or the countries west of her; and after 1931 the west was increasingly unwilling to take their products. Britain concluded the Ottawa Agreement. France protected her agriculture; even Italy, although in 1934 she made certain concessions to Austria and Hungary, could do so only on a very small scale in view of her own internal policy.

Germany had herself practised a highly protectionist agricultural policy during the first decade and a half after 1919, and her trade with the Danubian states had been of little importance to her. In the years 1929-33 Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania, Yugoslavia and Bulgaria together supplied only 8-9 % of Germany's total imports, and took only 10-11 % of her exports. Of the Danubian states, the German trade was most important for Czechoslovakia, which

sent to Germany 16-19 % of her exports and took thence 25-28 % of her imports, and to Austria, which showed similar but slightly lower figures. For Hungary (which still did two or three times as much trade with Austria as with Germany) and Rumania the figures were lower; for the Balkan states lower still.

In 1936, however, Dr Schacht initiated the new German trading policy towards the south-east European countries. He offered them a practically unlimited market for most of their produce, but while the clearing system which he perfected obviated the difficulties which the Danubian countries were meeting in trading with other countries with free currency, it also restricted their use of the sums derived from their sales in Germany to the purchase of German goods.

The result was that the trade of the Danubian and Balkan states, which had fallen to a derisively low point in the world crisis, rose again rapidly, and in this rise the share of Germany took an ever larger part, as the figures given on p. 142 show.

This was, of course, one of the methods by which Germany facilitated her political conquest of south-eastern Europe. All the governments concerned saw that economic domination must bring political domination with it; none of them relished the prospect. All of them, moreover, saw that once Germany established her hold, she might use it to drive harder and harder bargains. But none of them was in a position to resist permanently, although many of them

## Total foreign trade of

	1924	1929	1934	1938
Austria (millions of schillings):				
Imports	2905	3318	1173	—
Exports	1986	2220	380	—
Hungary (millions of pengö):				
Imports	815	1064	345	419
Exports	667	1039	404	523
Rumania (milliard lei):				
Imports	30.1	29.6	13.2	17.0
Exports	29.0	29.0	13.7	21.6
Yugoslavia (milliard dinar):				
Imports	2.7	7.6	3.5	5.0
Exports	2.9	7.9	3.8	5.0
Bulgaria (milliard leva):				
Imports	7.3	3.3	2.2	4.9
Exports	5.6	6.4	2.5	5.6

## *Percentual share of Germany in foreign trade*

	1924	1929	1934	1938*
Austria: Imp. from Germany	—	—	—	—
Exports to Germany	—	—	—	—
Czechoslovakia: Imp.	—	25.0	—	—
Exp.	—	19.3	—	—
Hungary: Imp.	—	20.0	18.3	40.9
Exp.	—	11.7	22.2	45.9
Rumania: Imp.	—	24.1	14.5	40.0
Exp.	—	27.6	16.6	26.5
Yugoslavia: Imp.	—	15.6	13.9	39.4
Exp.	—	8.5	15.4	42.0
Bulgaria: Imp.	—	22.2	40.2	52.0
Exp.	—	29.9	42.3	59.0

The figures for 1938 are, of course, swollen by the inclusion of Austria. When those for the 'Protectorate' of Bohemia-Moravia are included also, they show that Germany had by that time acquired almost a monopolistic position in relation to some countries; a stranglehold over them all. Since the present war broke out, that stranglehold has become even closer.

\* Including Austria, but not Czechoslovakia.

bargained with skill and tenacity. What Germany offered, and what she gave at first, was undeniably advantageous to them on balance and in the short run. Individual interests, notably in industry, might suffer, but the agricultural masses benefited substantially. They got secure markets, the certainty of disposing of their whole production, and even prices above those ruling in the world market. Their satisfaction with this state of things was a strong political factor which no government could ignore, while the countervailing injury to trade and industry was politically less unwelcome in some countries, and those the more highly industrialized, because those affected by it were largely Jews. The effects could even be rendered imperceptible for two or three years by legislation which amounted to the state's confiscating and living on Jewish capital. This process again created further vested interests in Germany's favour, in the shape of those persons who took the place, or hoped to do so, of the Jews. In reality, the process would probably mean in the long run that these classes were simply eliminated, and the south-east European peasant left face to face with the German buyer. There was small guarantee that the prices would then continue favourable. But this was a matter for the future, while for the present economic life in south-eastern Europe undeniably quickened, employment improved, and the standard of living rose very substantially. He would have been a bold Minister, in any south-east European country, who in 1937 or 1938 had proposed to cut the German connection.



## IX

### THE FUTURE

How, then, does the position stand to-day? Outside forces still overshadow the Danube basin, and will continue to do so, although not necessarily from the same quarters as in the immediate, not to speak of the remote, past. Certainly the threat will not reappear in our own time in the form in which our forefathers knew it. The Ottoman Empire as an aggressive, super-national force, belongs to the past.

After 1921, Turkey cut her losses, transformed herself into a national state, and entered on a new phase in her history. She may perhaps demand minor frontier rectifications here and there, but she is too thinly populated and economically too undeveloped to take up again her old role. She now herself belongs to the threatened nations of the danger zone, and in that capacity will prove again, as she has in the past, a valuable support to her smaller and more perilously situated colleagues.

Nor is Italy likely to prove a permanent threat to her neighbours. It is true that in 1941, after annexing to her kingdom the Slovene territories of Istria, Gorizia and half Carniola, as well as Dalmatia and the Dodecanese, and establishing Croatia, Montenegro and an enlarged Albania as 'protectorates' under her suzerainty, with Greece in her occupation and Hungary

and Bulgaria looking to her for support, she had acquired a more imposing position in south-eastern Europe than she had ever known, or than Rome knew after the fourth century.

And yet this position is obviously far in advance of her real strength. Even if one admits that she might have expected a larger share when the European Powers were scrambling to partition Africa, nothing has yet shown that modern Italy possesses either the moral or the material strength to dominate by her own efforts any other European people; at any rate, any people more than a million strong. Mussolini has snatched his present advantage by exploiting that curious kink in Hitler's mentality, revealed in *Mein Kampf*, which induced that usually shrewd observer to believe that Italy was Germany's natural ally, and consequently not merely to abstain from attacking her, but to lavish favours on her. Mussolini has thus been able to make his easy conquests in the shadow of Germany's sword. But either one of two circumstances would lose him his advantage: if Germany turned against him, or if Germany fell. One or both of these things is bound to happen; and then Mussolini's Balkan Empire will follow his Abyssinian Empire into limbo. At the end of this war, Italy will probably far rather be struggling to save herself, than seeking to dominate others.

The position of Russia is less certain. On the one hand, the sufferings which the smaller peoples have

undergone at the hands of Germany and Italy may bring some of them back to their old policy of reliance on Russia; there were signs in 1941 that this was possible. The social system of the Soviets might even begin to exert an overwhelming attraction on masses exhausted by war and privation; and the Soviet Union might find its frontiers extended, almost *malgré lui*, to distances impossible to predict to-day. On the other hand, it is also possible that the whole position and with it the whole face of the Eastern Question, might one day be transformed in the opposite sense by further developments in connection with that greatest of all the unsolved problems of east Europe, Ukrainian nationalism. Should the Ukraine ever break off from the U.S.S.R., it could not conceivably, undeveloped as it is, stand altogether alone. It would be forced to seek an alliance either with its neighbours or with Germany. Unfortunately, as we have seen, Ukrainian national ambitions conflict in the usual manner with those of other states and peoples—Poland, Hungary and Rumania—and there is obviously a danger that the Ukrainians might call in Germany to help them, or alternatively, drive their opponents to seek German (or possibly Russian) help against them. They themselves could hardly take Russia's traditional role of a counterweight to Germany for many years to come.

Pressure from Germany, on the other hand, is likely to be permanent. There is fortunately no need to assume that Germany's present position of extreme

domination will endure. She gained it by taking exceedingly skilful advantage of the unpreparedness, the hesitations and the divisions of others, and the present war is bound to entail for her a greater or less degree of exhaustion. But viewed in historical perspective, a part of the present position is only the logical and predictable outcome of processes which have been continuing for centuries. The gradual unification of Germany has had about it a quality of inevitability which must be recognized; and a unified Germany, inhabited by a talented and industrious people centrally situated on the Continent and sufficiently endowed with natural resources to develop into a first-class industrial and military power, must be a vital factor affecting the whole life of the Danube. The years since Versailles have obviously neither diminished the strength nor weakened the unity of the German people, while the economic readjustments which Germany has effected in or imposed on her south-eastern neighbours have clearly enhanced her importance for them. They may succeed in altering some of these arrangements, as being tyrannical and in the long run unsuitable for them. Similarly, force or their own free decision may determine the Austrians and the Sudeten Germans to leave the Reich once more. But it is impossible to alter the geographical fact that the great territory inhabited by the mass of the German nation straddles across the upper reaches of the Danube, interposing its huge, populous, and

highly industrialized bulk between the lower waters of the river and western Europe. It would be imprudent to reckon that internal disunity in the German people would nullify the enormous influence which these facts enable Germany to exercise on the Danubian area, and indeed, on all eastern Europe.

But between Germany, Russia and Italy there will still be found an area the peoples of which are neither German nor Russian nor Italian, and the supreme interest of these peoples, their national liberty and national security, will continue to depend on their freedom from outside domination. It is impossible to define in other terms than this the boundaries of this area, although it must be restated that the dissolution of the Habsburg Monarchy has permanently altered the geographical scope of the whole problem. There is no longer any meaning in distinguishing between Danubian and Balkan problems, when the Yugoslav and Rumanian peoples are as much Danubian as Balkan. Poland, on the other hand, ceased to be Danubian when the unnatural situation created by the Partitions was liquidated, but her problems, as well as those of the Baltic peoples—perhaps also of the Scandinavian; but this sketch cannot wander so far afield as Scandinavia—differ in no important respect from those of the other comparatively small nations hemmed in between Germany on the one side and Russia on the other. As regards security, they are identical.

In this respect they are, of course, identical also with the interests of the world at large. To-day, more than ever, the maintenance of the independence, security and stability of the Danubian area is also a vital interest of the whole world. A powerful and aggressive state which robs the east European nations of their independence also threatens the safety of the world, since it remains, as it always has been, dangerous to the world if any one Great Power, or two or three Great Powers acting in permanent collusion (if such a thing is possible), acquire a complete and monopolistic control of this area. The more powerful the state aiming at such control, the heavier the yoke which it imposes on the Danubian peoples if it succeeds, and also the greater the peril to the world. And this danger, it should be remarked, is most pressing of all to those immediate neighbours of the Danubian area which have not themselves obtained control of it—and all of them cannot hope to do so simultaneously. To each of these, the success of one of its rivals means something much more serious than a neutral state of things. The U.S.S.R., or Russia, can still enjoy uninterrupted access to the warm seas for all legitimate purposes, without physical possession of the Straits, if they are in possession of Turkey, or of a Balkan federation, but not if they are controlled by a Germany able from this vantage-point to throttle her whole development or threaten her very existence. Even to Italy, Yugoslavia is a much less serious threat to her Adriatic

position than either Germany, or a Slavonic state ten times the size of Yugoslavia. Germany herself would have genuine reason to fear a successful south-westward expansion by the U.S.S.R. which established along her whole eastern and southern frontiers a federation numerically twice the size of Germany herself.

This identity of world and Danubian interests in the question of security naturally carries with it certain implications for the world. Those to which Danubian security is an asset must be prepared to pay the price for it. But essential as this point is, the present sketch cannot elaborate it, nor discuss whether the support which will have to be given from outside to Danubian security would be most effectively rendered through a reformed League of Nations, a guarantee by certain Great Powers, or some other method. The writer may perhaps state his personal conviction that not only is the security of eastern Europe dependent on that of western Europe, and *vice versa*, but that both are indissolubly bound up with the security both of Germany and of Russia.

But while effective support from outside will remain one essential factor in the security of eastern Europe, the other must be sought in eastern Europe itself. The change in the geographical scope of the problem has, of course, brought certain advantages to the smaller peoples. Their total numbers probably exceed those of the Germans themselves; easily so, if Turkey and

Italy are counted in on the defensive front. On the other hand, it remains as true as ever that each of the smaller peoples, taken individually, is far smaller and weaker than the German or the Russian. The Polish people itself is large only relatively to its neighbours on the north and south. Many of the others enjoy the advantage of a much higher birth-rate and also, despite a high death-rate, of a higher rate of natural increase than the German (although not the Russian), but it will take time before this alters the situation very greatly. Nor, of course, will numbers avail very greatly unless backed by economic strength. The security of these peoples therefore depends on whether such healthy relations can be created between them that they will combine to defend themselves and even each other; and in these last few pages we shall examine the prospects of creating such co-operation in the light of past experience, as applied to present conditions.

One certainty, at least, has emerged quite definitively from the history of the last twenty—or rather, of the last ninety-three—years. This is, that any plan which hopes to succeed must consider the wishes and needs of the east European peoples as a whole, not only of a favoured part of them. It must be constructive and synthetic, not a policy of balance. The alliance of the Habsburg dynasty with the three most powerful national factors in the Monarchy, the Germans, Magyars and Poles, broke down at last under the assaults of peoples which then appeared to be much



weaker. The reversal of that policy which set the Poles, Czechoslovaks, Rumanians and Yugoslavs in the favoured position failed equally, although fortified by French armies and the blessings of the League of Nations. Any conceivable combination which seeks to achieve its end by the same method of satisfying one party and rendering the opposition impotent, will be as futile and as impermanent.

Our description of recent developments in the national field leads to the same conclusion. National feeling is to-day more obviously than ever the strongest political force in eastern Europe, more loudly insistent in claiming priority over historical considerations—which recent events, by adding a whole new set of claims based on 1919 and another based on 1938 and 1939 have in any case reduced practically *ad absurdum*. But all the main nations of eastern Europe are now also nationally self-conscious to an almost equal degree, and they have now reached a stage when they can no longer be given differential treatment. Peoples linked together by ethnic affinity, common historical traditions or other shared interests may choose to enter into especially close association with each other on a footing of equality; but all national imperialisms, whether based on historic claims, ancient or modern, on the pretension to fill some special imperial role in eastern Europe, or on merits acquired in the present war, or any other, will lead to revolt and instability if they involve the maintenance or re-

establishment of a hierarchy of nations. The same principles of freedom and equality will need to be applied in the mutual relations of the smaller nations as the area as a whole demands in its relationship to the outer world.

But to split up eastern Europe into a series of self-regarding national states, with frontiers drawn as nearly as possible to the ethnic line, would merely perpetuate the atomization introduced by Germany, and would certainly not solve the problem of the Danube. To begin with, each of these states would be hopelessly inferior to Germany or Russia in military strength. Some form of association for common defence, entailing necessarily a degree of common foreign policy, is indispensable for their security. Moreover, other difficulties also will remain unsolved unless there is some form of association. The question of admixture of populations has, as we have seen, altered but little in the last twenty years, and the now fashionable remedy of exchange of populations, although it may relieve certain local complications, cannot prove a panacea. Apart from the fact that the operation is far more painful, difficult and expensive than is commonly supposed, it cannot even touch the problem of the conflict between ethnic and 'natural' boundaries. Sufficient Czechs simply could not be found to populate Bohemia-Moravia within their natural, historic and strategic frontiers, if all the Germans were evicted; nor sufficient Magyars to

people Hungary within hers. The Czechs and the Magyars are, incidentally, the two Danubian peoples with the smallest rate of natural increase.

Furthermore, a system of self-regarding national states, with ethnic frontiers, would perpetuate the economic weaknesses of the present system. Just as the smaller nations need security from their over-powerful neighbours, and cannot possibly obtain it without combining, so the best protection for them against economic exploitation by Germany, and also the best means of raising their standard of living, would be the creation of an intermediary economic unit, between Germany and the U.S.S.R., planned, as are the German and Russian economic units, primarily for the benefit of its own inhabitants, and sufficiently large, elastic and economically differentiated to preserve its economic independence. There are, however, many differences between the economic and the national issues involved. One serious problem is whether the optimum frontiers of the economic unit do not differ from its natural national frontiers; and if so, which set of considerations should be given precedence. The eastern slopes of the Bohemian mountains, Vienna, even Silesia, perhaps even Trieste, may not belong to eastern Europe under our political definition thereof; but their inclusion would certainly strengthen it economically. The statesmen of the future will presumably have to weigh, to the best of their ability, the national against the economic, perhaps

also the strategic arguments for and against the inclusion of each of these in eastern Europe. The answers cannot be given here.

Inside the unit also, the economic position is quite different from the national. An efficient economic organization of eastern Europe would have to disregard ethnic frontiers altogether. It would have to start from the widest point of view, that of the needs of the unit as a whole, and the principle of *sum cuique* would mean, not that each national unit, or even each geographical one, produced the same things, but rather that each produced the things which it was best fitted to produce, fulfilling a special role within and for the benefit of the whole.

Finally, the economic position vis-à-vis the outer world is also different from the national-political. Nationally, eastern Europe needs complete freedom from the national imperialism of its neighbours. Economically, it needs independence in the sense of protection from exploitation, but it could not achieve, and would not be benefited by, autarky. It would still give and receive benefits by trading with the outer world, and especially with Germany and Italy. The imagined mutually complementary nature of central Europe proper and central-eastern Europe is, as we have seen, partly artificial, and due to historical causes which have now passed away. It may be expected to decrease with a rational organization and development of the Danube valley and the Balkans. But it will not

disappear, and it is not in the interests of either party, nor of the world, that it should disappear. And it may be added that the western countries would be unwise if they simply attempted to outbid Germany in the Danubian markets. Even if their obligations in other directions allowed them to do so, they would always be at a disadvantage in respect of greater distances, higher freights, and less experience of Danubian needs and tastes. If they even attempted to do so without first providing for such a reorganization of the internal economy of the Danubian area as restored at least the natural economic ties connecting them, and thus increased the internal exchanges of the area as a whole, they would find the experiment costly indeed. It would fail in the end, and the different weak and artificial national economies would before long drift back into a one-sided dependence on Germany which would in its turn bring back Germany's political supremacy.

Finally: just as the rest of the world will have to be prepared to defend, if necessary, the political independence of eastern Europe, so it will have to contribute towards settling its economics on a sound basis. There will be need of capital to develop its resources, of markets to take its supplies, and of a more liberal immigration policy for its surplus populations. All this can, however, be done far more cheaply than might be supposed if it is combined with a firm and even ruthless reorganization on a planned basis.

The new eastern Europe which might emerge in

the future might be something very different from any of its predecessors. It would have to be constructed on a plan which no statesman has ever been in a position to impose since the invasions from the east began their devastating work of destruction and confusion. It would choose for itself natural limits, external and internal, unhampered by the unvenerable relics of history. It would take separately each of the three great needs of security, national freedom and economic welfare, in each case working within the appropriate limits and through the appropriate organization. The forms which it evolved would probably be something which the world has not yet seen; but then, the world has not yet seen eastern Europe organized as its special conditions require.

This would be a task worth performing. Throughout this sketch, the emphasis has rested on the complications and difficulties, the mutually irreconcilable ambitions and the tedious quarrels. These are the things which call for explanation and action. But behind them, there is a certain underlying Danubian culture, a peculiar charm and special value; and these it owes precisely to the conditions which have made its statesmen despair. Its different races and cultures have met not only to clash, but also to enrich and fructify each other. Its special history and conditions have produced something which does not fit easily into the pattern of the world, but the world would be immeasurably the poorer without it.

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